

ANAND NIRJHAR

By

Swami Akhandanand Saraswati

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A Showering of Bliss

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Translated by

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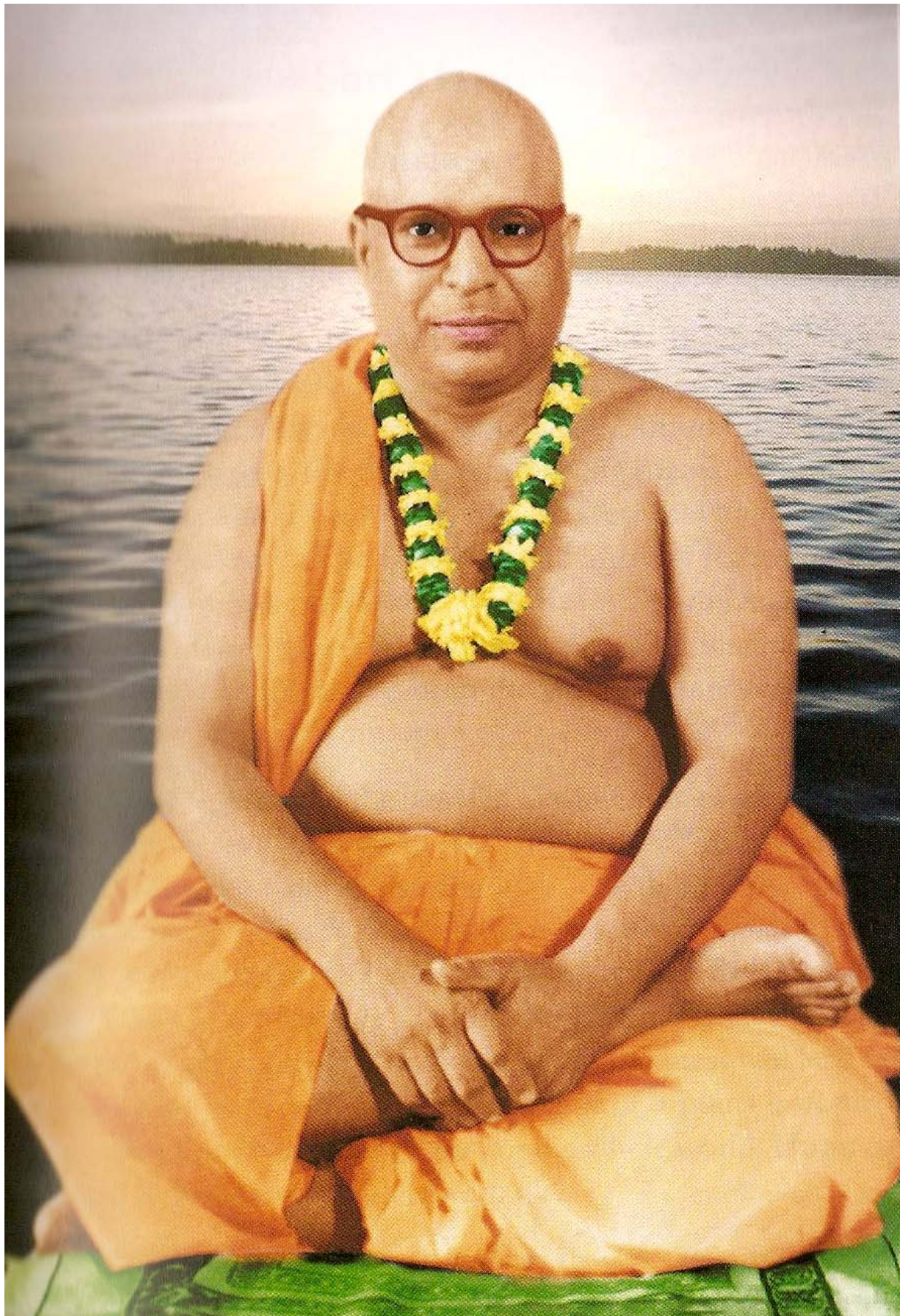
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Ananda Nirjhar

A shower of bliss

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Introduction

‘Anand Nirjhar’ (A Shower of Bliss) is composed of twelve talks that were held on different occasions of the Sanyas Jayantis of Swami Akhandanand Saraswatiji Maharaj. These talks explain the essence of the essence of Sanyas. We are, unfortunately, losing sight of the contribution of those who renounce the world in search of the Supreme. It is even more unfortunate that due to the mushrooming of charlatans posing as Monks, we often get led astray; or else, we dismiss the genuine along with the fake. In either case, we are the losers.

Another misnomer is that we, who live in the modern world, are unaffected or unconcerned with the brotherhood of Monks or religion. The brilliant expositions on Sanyas given by Maharajji give us an insight into how the principle of Sanyas benefits every individual – regardless of caste, creed or status – who gets some insight of the psychology behind the system.

I hope that readers will avail of this concise presentation of a vital aspect of human life, and derive the benefits analyzed so lucidly by my revered Guru, Swami Akhandanandji Maharaj.

Purnima L. Toolsidass
March 2008.

Sanyas Jayanti

Sanyas Ka Artha

The Meaning of Sanyas.

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Today, on the occasion of Sanyas Jayanti (the anniversary of the day I became a Sanyasi), I will tell you something about Sanyas. People know very little about Sanyas in present times, The influence of the Kali Yuga (the age called Kali, in which all negative trends increase) results in the disappearing of the varnaashrama-vibhaaga (the system of society being divided into four statuses called Varnas, and four stages of life called Ashrams). People's faith in Varnashram is weakened.

वादहिं शुद्र द्विजन सन, हम तुम ते कछु घाटि। *Vaadahin shudra dvija sana, hama tuma te` kachu ghaati*. The Shudras argue with learned people, saying, 'We are your equals.' Look; it must be absolutely clear in your mind that Sanyas is an Ashram. It is not a rule or a discipline of life. Sanyas is a Dharma of the Ashrams. The framework of Varna and Ashram comes within the eternal constitution of what is right.

We make four divisions to explain the Tattva (essence, the Brahman). विश्व-विराट् *Vishwa-viraata* (the material world), तैजस्-हिरण्यगर्भ *taijas-hiranyagarbha* (the subtle world), प्राज्ञ-इश्वर *praagya-eeshvara* (the universal consciousness) and the तुरीय *tureeya* (the unmanifest Brahman). In the same way, we make four divisions to explain the Ashram Dharma. These are the Brahmacharya (the celibate student), the Grihastha (married householder), Vanaprastha (the middle-aged who turn to spirituality) and Sanyas (renouncing the material world). You can understand the Brahmacharya to be the Vishwa, the Grihastha to be the Taijas, the Vanaprastha to be the Pragya, and Sanyas to be the Turiya. If the difference between the Pragya and the Turiya is understood, the Sanyas Ashram will also be understood clearly.

Let us first see the origin of the word संन्यास *sannyaasa*. Sanyas is composed of san+ni+aasa=sannyaasa. 'Sam' means properly, that is, as ordained by the Shastras. 'Ni' means fully; and 'aasa' means to throw. Thus, Sanyas means to throw fully, using the proper method given by the Shastras.

Actually, the 'throwing' is taught since childhood. When a small child picks something up and wants to put it into his mouth, his parents teach him how to discriminate. They teach him what should be picked up, what is proper to eat, etc. Sometimes the parents tell the child to touch something or not touch something. They tell him to put something into his mouth, or not put something into his mouth, etc.

As soon as the divisions of विधि-निषेधात्मक *vidhi-nishe`dha* (right and wrong) come into the mind of the child, two systems are started in his life. This is good, and this is bad. This should be done, and this should not be done. This is to be obtained, and this is to be given up, etc.

This system of obtaining and giving up continues in the saadhanaa (effort for spiritual progress) for turning inwards. The superior objects are to be absorbed, and the inferior ones are to be discarded. What is श्रेष्ठ *shre`shtha* (superior) and what is निन्दित *nindita* (lowly)? Don't obtain this information through personal experience! Tell me, is alcohol good or bad? Will you need to drink alcohol to get this information? My brother, one man went so far as to say, 'I will eat excreta to find out how it tastes.'

If people use the method of obtaining personal experience of everything, it will ruin their lives. The teachings of parents and Teachers must be used to determine what should be accepted and what should be rejected. Life cannot be orderly and beneficial unless the teachings and commands of the wise are accepted.

There is a description in the Shrutis (Vedic verses):

न्यास एषां तपसां अतिरिक्तं आहुः *Nyaasa e`shaam tapasaam atiriktam aahuh.*

That means that of all the different kinds of asceticism in the world, Sanyas is the greatest. This is why the word 'atirikta' has been used. न्यास एवातिरिच्येत् '*Nyaasa e`vaatirichye`t,*' means that न्यास *nyaasa* (depositing) lifted Sanyas above the others, made it greater than the others, and made it free of the others. The word 'nyas' is also used in the principle of Bhakti. The Sect of Shri Ramanuja Acharya has a book called, 'Nyasaganapati'. Shri Vallabha Acharyaji Maharaj had brought it here from the South. 'Nyas' is also used in the principle of upasana (worship).

Another meaning of nyas is, to place. It is made from the root, 'asa'. 'Aasa' means, to sit. The word 'aasana' (a mat or throne) comes from 'aasa.' Asana means, to sit; 'ni' means fully; 'sam' means properly. Therefore, Sanyas means to sit properly, in our own, non-dual essence – the supreme Brahman – in a way that is not contrary to the Shastras. Look, in Sanyas there is a connection between throwing and placing, between accepting and discarding, between giving up and maintaining. The Sanyas Ashram is meant to show these up. Narayana! Even धर्मानुष्ठान *dharmaanushtaana* (Dharmik rituals) are Sanyas. It is Sanyas to retire from worldly activity. It is Sanyas to experience our Atma to be the non-dual Brahman. Tell me, my brother, what does all this mean? Think about it! You have to give up अधर्म *adharma* (that which is contrary to Dharma) before you can be established in a Dharmik ritual. You can have belief and an inclination for thinking about Bhagwan only when your attachment to the world is weakened. It is only when you stop thinking about the people you care about – your friends and relatives – that you can establish yourself in the unattached essence of your Atma. It is only after negating the illusion of the interactive world that you obtain the ब्रह्मात्मैक्यानुभूति *brahmaatmaikyaaanubhooti* (the experience that the Brahman and the Atma are one). So,

my brother, the purpose of the Sanyas Ashram is to reveal the appropriate connection in giving up and sustaining, that exists in life.

Come, I will now tell you something from the viewpoint of Dharma, upasana, Yoga, and Vedanta. In Dharma, good work, indulgences, speech and accumulation are, all four, given up. From the viewpoint of Dharma, Sanyas means to accept that which is good, and give up that which is bad. It is not possible to have a Sanyas that adheres to Dharma, unless seniors give us the proper guidance. If anyone thinks that he can learn धर्मनिष्ठा *dharmanishthaa* (faith in Dharma) without being taught by seniors, he is either a fool, or he is a hypocrite. He is rotten, and he wants to spoil others. Goodness cannot be absorbed when a person is in a state of adharma, injustice, or cheating. Nor can wrong tendencies be given up when a person is in that state. It is only when a person is in a state of Dharma that he can accept the Sanyas of giving up adharma.

Now, when wrong actions are given up, from the viewpoint of Dharma, and goodness is accepted, then the state of upasana is reached. In the state of upasana, the only feeling that is desirable for the साधक *saadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) is the feeling for the Bhagwan he worships.

During the state of upasana, the eyes of the sadhak are fixed on Bhagwan. Every action, feeling, and awareness of his is offered up to the Lord. Look; there is a fault even in goodness! Goodness gives rise to vanity. 'I am a very good person.' An element of अविद्या *avidyaa* (ignorance, nescience) is present even in goodness. To give up the vanity that results from your goodness, you should offer up your goodness to Bhagwan. Offer up to Him all the good deeds you do, the comforts you get, the things you say, and all you have. Don't eat without offering food to Him first. Speak for His sake. Utter His name, praise Him, recite passages that eulogize Him, etc. When Bhagwan becomes the subject and the object of your speech, it will be an offering to Him. All your possessions should be for the purpose of serving Him. When this state of upasana is reached, it becomes a Sanyas that is an offering to Bhagwan.

I will now tell you something about the renunciation in Sanyas from the viewpoint of the Yoga Shastra. In the opinion of Yoga, we have no connection with the world we see around us. This interactive world is a sport – a game – of Prakriti (Nature, or the Lord's power of Creation). Followers of the Sankhya philosophy call this world a विकार *vikaara* (distortion) of Prakriti. For those who are inclined towards worldly indulgences, this world is a विकास *vikaasa* (expansion) of Prakriti; and for people who are inclined towards renunciation, it is a distortion of Prakriti.

A person whose heart is filled with desires considers this material world to be an expansion of Prakriti, and concentrates on the world outside. A person whose antahkaran (fourfold mind or subtle body) is free of desires, considers this world to be a distortion of Prakriti, and focuses on the inner world.

In the आध्यात्मिक *aadhyaatmik* (pertaining to spiritual matters) world, this world is considered to be the vikara of Prakriti, but worldly people consider it to be a vikasa of Prakriti. This is the exact calculation of both viewpoints.

To give up the relationship (with worldly matters) because you consider it to be bad, is the Sanyas of the Dharma section. To offer up everything good to Bhagwan is the upasana section is of Dharma. To have no relationship with any is the Sanyas of the Yoga section. It is not Sanyas when people say, 'This is my Mutt,' or, 'this is my bank balance.' It is a lofty state of Sanyas when the person feels that he is unrelated to any place, person, or object.

When the relationship (with the world) is severed on an impulse, the detachment does not endure. When the त्याग *tyaaga* (giving up) is done with discrimination, and as ordained by the Shastras, then it is an enduring detachment. Discrimination, as well as the Shastras, is required. We are sometimes misled by our discrimination, because it is sullied with our desires. This is why we should measure our discrimination on the scales of the Shastras. Then we will know whether our discrimination is leading us to the right path. Our discrimination should be inspected according to the rules of the Shastras.

The laws that are made are within the framework of our Constitution. Even today, the primary factor is not the President or the Prime Minister. No Parliamentarian or Government Officer is the authority. The Constitution of the land rules over everyone. Any new amendment will be examined to see whether it is in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, or whether it is going against it in any way.

My brother, the Constitution that is based on the Vedas is Satya. It is eternal. It is the deciding factor of what is right and proper. So, we should check with what the Shastras command, and make sure that our discrimination is not faulty. To look through the intellect that uses discrimination in keeping with the Shastras, and to detach ourselves from everything in the external world and remain established in the unattached essence of our Atma, is Sanyas, according to the Yoga Shastra.

In Yoga, the giving up of relationships is the main thing. This is also the method in Sanyas. The unattached witness – the consciousness that is our Atma – is established in its essence. It does not identify with Prakriti, or the actions of Prakriti. It contains two types – अभ्यास *abhyaasa* (practice) and वैराग्य *vairagya* (detachment).

People who thrive on momentary pleasures develop the habit of making their minds inactive. They are satisfied with the feeling of peace in the idleness that is a result of practice. This inactivity of the mind is a condition that exists in a small part of the heart, for a little while. It may be that this inactivity gives a short-term pleasure, but when the person rises from this state, his mind is flooded once again with all the attachments, aversions, and delusions that filled it before he cultivated the ability to quiet his thoughts temporarily, with regular practice.

Therefore, in Yoga, our Yogis do not accept abhyas to be a complete sadhan for Samadhi, or for the state of being established in our essence. They say that both abhyas and vairagya are necessary. Vairagya means to have no attachment or aversion for that which we want to give up; and to be established in the unattached Atma. This is a condition similar to the Pragya.

In the opinion of Yoga, the essence of Sanyas is that the Atma is completely unattached. You see, if you sit for meditation with the thought, 'This house, family, money, possessions, relationships, business, etc are all mine,' the thought comes from the current situation. It does not give birth to a detached state of mind. The thought that the Atma is not attached to anything has been created from the viewpoint of the circumstances. It is akin to saying, 'This is the time to have more children,' or, 'this is the time to stop having any more children.' So, my brothers, detach yourself from the world, and then use your discrimination to understand that the Atma is unattached. If you sit in meditation for a little while, and get the feeling of being detached; but your attachments and aversions and delusions return as soon as the meditation is over, then that detachment is temporary. There should be a feeling of being detached from the world, and the seeker should practice being established in the desired mental state.

तत्र स्थितौ यत्त्वौऽभ्यासः *Tatra sthitam yatraubhyaasah.*

In the opinion of Buddhism, Jainism, and Yoga, the meaning of Sanyas is, 'pull back your hand.' That means, withdraw from all that is wrong. That is the Sanyas of Dharma. To not consider good things to be ours, and offer them up to Bhagwan, is the Sanyas of upasana. To give up the relationship with Prakriti and all that is created by Prakriti, and to stay in the essence of our Atma, is the Sanyas of Yoga.

Had Sanyas meant only the त्याग *tyaaga* (giving up) of relationships; or had Sanyas meant only to practice remaining established in the unattached essence of the Atma; or had Sanyas meant only Samadhi – then, Sanyas could never have been possible in interaction. In the opinion of Vedanta, the Sanyas of Yoga is escapism. Where will you be, by running away from interaction and going into a Samadhi? Interaction will return as soon as your Samadhi is over. Vedanta has a method to uproot this interaction completely.

This is according to Satya, not according to the utility. When the mental inclinations are blocked from the Atma, you sit as an असंग द्रष्टा *asanga drashtaa* (a detached observer). This is not an asanga drashta created by you; this is the Paramatma who is naturally one with the Atma in you. So, don't consider yourself to be a form that is detached temporarily. Detachment is your natural essence. You are detached, whether space, time, and matter exist or not. Space, time and matter exist when you are conscious of them. They do not exist when you are not conscious of them.

The Atma remains unchanged in both conditions. It is a greater reality than space, time and matter. It is longer and wider than space. Space can be negated, but the substratum

on which it exists cannot be negated. Its existence is greater than the existence of matter, because matter can be negated, whereas its substratum (the Brahman) cannot be negated. That unchanging, supreme existence is your Atma. It is you, yourself. You are the त्रिकालाबाधित सत्य स्वरूप आत्मा *trikaalaabaadhita satya svaroopaa aatma*. You exist. Your existence can never be negated, in the past, present or future. It is the non-dual supreme essence of the Brahman. It is the Paramatma.

The Gnan of the self-effulgent substratum that is the Atma, negates the length and breadth of the objects that are seen in space, and it negates the age of the objects in time. That means, that the space, time and matter that are perceived in our essence are मिथ्या *mithyaa* – they are relative truths. They have no existence in our essence, which is the non-dual Brahman. They are perceptions like something seen in a dream.

Therefore, in the opinion of Vedanta, interaction and Samadhi come into the same category. The main Sanyas is the negation of duality.

I will now tell you some old stories. If we hear something when we are very young, or obtain knowledge too easily, our mind does not grasp the value of what we are told. The Baba of Mokulpur had come to our village. He was a totally carefree Mahatma. I remember how the Gangaji flowed. There was a broad stretch of sand, and a banyan tree stood at the edge of the bank of the river. I am told that the tree no longer stands. It fell due to the flow of the river. Baba used to sit on a platform that was built at the foot of this tree. We would sit at a lower level.

‘Maharaj,’ I asked, ‘should साधन-भजन *saadhan-bhajan* (effort for obtaining the Lord and singing His glories) be done?’

‘Guru,’ that was his style of talking, ‘sadhan-bhajan is that you do nothing. Even without doing anything, so much is seen. If you do anything more, all this will only increase; it will not decrease, my brother. This great world stands before you without your having done anything. It will only increase by your doing something, isn’t it? By doing something, you cannot reduce the world; you can only increase it. The *sansaara* (interactive world) is increased by karma, and is decreased by अकर्म *akarma* (absence of action). Therefore, it is sadhan-bhajan to not do anything.’

Now, tell me! You will all say, ‘You give a lofty sermon about Dharma, upasana, Yoga, Vedanta, and now you ruin it all!’ My brother, I do not ruin it all. Please attend closely to what I say.

If I were to tell you to sit silently without moving for an hour, or three hours, would you be able to do so? You know very well that you can’t do it. You are so habituated to moving your limbs and wagging your tongue that it is impossible for you to sit for long without moving or talking. My brother, if it is not impossible, it is certainly very difficult! Talking, at least, has become such a compulsive habit that it is almost overpowering. At times, some ladies come. Their tongues snip and cut like a pair of scissors. They talk when they come into my room, and they continue to talk when they

go into the hall. When they go into the kitchen they become even more vociferous. They speak continuously, and the whole atmosphere reverberates with the sound of their voice.

The fact is that it is natural to keep busy with some activity or other. We need to do sadhan-bhajan to cultivate the habit of not doing anything! I had come to know of this when I was very young. I was given this knowledge without making any effort for it. So, I did not value it. What is important to me is the comment given by Bhagwan.

बामसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्।

‘Aatmasanstham manah kritvaa na kinchidapi chintaye`t.’

Place your mind in your Atma, and be free of all worries.

Narayana! Now I will tell you of another old story. I was sitting before a Mahatma. These days, people do not know how they should sit. They don’t know which posture is insolent. They sit with their legs crossed. Anyhow! I sat before the Mahatma in an आसन *aasana* (Yogic posture) with great decorum. I closed my eyes, straightened my back, and regulated my breathing.

‘My son,’ said the Mahatma, ‘what are you doing?’

‘Maharaj,’ I replied, ‘I am not doing anything. I am just sitting.’

‘Oh, is sitting not doing something?’ he asked. ‘My son, it is a sadhna even to sit with detachment.

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येत् अकर्मधि च कर्म यः।

“Karmanyakarma yah pashye`t akarmani cha karma yah”.

You see, it is an action even to sit with your eyes closed. It is an action to stop yourself from blinking, and to keep your eyes fixed on a single point. It is an action to hold your breath, control your mind, etc. This, too, is a sadhan. My brother, desist from doing anything at all, and sit with a feeling of total detachment. Let this state come into your life.

Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj told us, ‘Don’t move, don’t speak, and don’t think.’ Try to do this. You will become quiet and relaxed. Your mind will turn inwards and face your Atma. The fact is that this detachment, this turning inwards in your attempt to be established in the essence of your Self, is your sadhan-bhajan.

Come, I will tell you yet another, very old story. A Sadhu called Thanthanpala Baba lived in Madhya Pradesh. He was a totally carefree Monk. He was not bothered about what he wore, or how he lived. He would not converse with anybody. He kept no utensils. He would eat if someone fed him with their own hand. If anyone picked him up on their shoulder, and carried him somewhere, he allowed them to do so. Otherwise, he would lie in one place. By the Grace of God I went to meet him. I was accompanied by Swami Swarupanandji, who is currently the head of the Jyotish Peetha. He is highly respected all over the world. In those days, he and I used to stay together.

Jyotishpeethadhishwara Swami Swarupanandji asked Thanthanpala Baba, ‘Maharaj, what is sadhan?’

I will tell you what he said in reply. Please don't take offence. You are all great sadhakas. Look, it is not I who am saying this; I am merely using my voice to repeat the words of this carefree Monk. Please don't hold me responsible. Isn't it? Yes! So, this carefree Thanthanpala Baba said, 'Sadhan is an ass!' Swarupanandji was taken aback. I told him, 'My brother, don't feel bad about his words. As long as we have *agnaana* (lack of Gnan) sadhan is indeed an ass (a helpless beast of burden). Baba is only repeating what Shankaracharya has said.'

Shankaracharya has said, 'We need to do sadhan as long as we have avidya. When avidya is dispelled there is no further need for sadhan.'

अविद्यैविषयाणि सर्वाणि शास्त्राणि प्रत्यक्षाण्यपि प्रमाणानि शास्त्राणि च अविद्यवद् विषयाणि ।

Avidyaivishayaani sarvaani shaastraani pratyakshaanyapi pramaanaani shaastraani cha avidyavad vishayaani.

Actually, you are making yourself a beast of burden of worldly relationships. You are making an ass of yourself over worldly objects. It is true that you do not actually carry the relationships on your shoulder, but you have loaded them onto your heart and mind. As long as you are the donkey of the washer-man and the potter; as long as you remain a slave to the worldly relationships and objects – what is the problem in using the word 'donkey'? Isn't this word also used for slaves?

You believe that, which does not really exist, to be real. You clutch at what will not remain with you. As long as duality exists for you, and you are dependent on worldly factors; as long as your mind and heart are enslaved and you are burdened by them, you should pay attention to the truth of these words of a carefree Monk, 'Sadhan is an ass!'

I am discussing Sanyas today because Sanyas is a basic factor of life. It begins right from childhood. 'Don't eat this! Don't touch this,' etc. The basis of Sanyas during the state of unconsciousness is impulsive. When a person is overcome with प्रेम *pre`ma* (pure love), he offers up his all to the Beloved. He no longer feels that anything belongs to him. In the state of विवेक *vive`ka* (discrimination) the person detaches himself from everything. In the state of enlightenment, सोवत बैठत पड़त उताने, कहे कबीर हम वही ठिकाने। '*sovata baithata padata uthaane`, kahe` kabeera hama vahee thikaane`.*'

When a person obtains ब्रह्मात्मैक्यानुभूति *brahmaatmaikyabhooti* (the experience that the Brahman is everything) everything becomes the Paramatma. Work if you want, or remain silent. Go into Samadhi, or stitch shoes! The practice of stitching shoes is very common among us, Sanyasis. You all live in a city, so you may not know about this. You may, or may not have gone to any Monks. I have been wandering among them for forty years. The अवधूत *avadhoota* (Monks who keep no possessions) Mahatmas may be busy stitching shoes, or they may sit in a Samadhi. The fact is that they remain established in their non-dual essence that is the supreme Brahman.

Narayana! If someone suddenly shows you a stout stick, saying, 'I will kill you,' you will immediately say, 'My brother, don't kill me. Take my fifty million rupees, but

spare my life.’ You see, your impulse to let go of your money to save your life is basically another form of Sanyas. You are essentially prepared to give up everything for आत्मरक्षा *aatamrakshaa* (self-preservation). This basic inclination to let go is what manifests as Sanyas. Some people give up adharma, and some people offer up Dharma to Bhagwan. Some people use discrimination and become detached, and some people negate the interactive world by using discrimination according to the Shastras. They become established in the Brahman that is their essence.

वैराग्यरागोपाधिभ्यां आमनतो धर्मलक्षणात्।

Vairaagyaraagopaadhibhyaam aamnato dharmalakshanaat.

Dharma has two characteristics – one is the Dharma that manifests in the naturally detached mind, and the other is the Dharma that manifests in the mind that is attached to the world. Dharma is present in the mind of both the रागी *raagi* (attached person) and the वैरागी *vairaagi* (detached person).

The Dharma of the ragi is predominantly filled with activity, and the Dharma of the vairagi is predominantly to withdraw from worldly activities. The pinnacle of withdrawal from worldly activities is a life of Sanyas. Actually, Sanyas is a truth in the life of a human being. There is nobody in the world in whose heart the thought does not come, that there is peace and happiness in giving up. Truly, the essence of elixir exists in giving up.

त्यागेनैके अमृत्वमानशुः। *Tyaage`naike`amritatvamaanashuh.*

When a wife taunts her husband bitterly, he sometimes gets the thought, ‘There is so much strife in this house! I should go away and live in peace.’ There are times when the son does not listen to his father. ‘These relationships of son and father, etc are all false. I should go and live somewhere by myself. I should do Bhagwan’s bhajan. That will bring fulfillment into my life.’ When the business goes badly, and the income reduces, the thought comes, ‘There are too many problems in earning wealth. We face repeated losses. I earned so much, and lost so much. I have now grown old. Death is dancing over my head. My ability to deal with the waxing and waning of Maya (the Lord’s power of delusion) is reducing. Come, let me retire from business and trading. Let me earn the true wealth of life.’

Such feelings of giving up worldly attachments and considerations come to the mind of every person at some point in life. No matter how many materialistic people are born in this world, and no matter how much Communism spreads, the resolve to give up worldly hassles comes to every person sooner or later. Then he wants to be rid of everything. The feeling that Sanyas is worthwhile is strong in every heart. Sanyas Jayanti reminds people of this truth by celebrating the liberation of the person who became a Sanyasi.

Sanyas Jayanti means, ‘Long live Sanyas’, or ‘Victory to Sanyas’. Oh, Brahmacharis! Oh Grihasthas! Oh Vanaprasthis! The feeling of rejection you have for this fourth

Ashram of Sanyas is a rejection – or giving up – of Dharma, of the Shastras, and of Satya. Hence, keep Sanyas in your mind also. It is something that is very important; it has a great utility, and is extremely fruitful for your life. Sanyas is an eternal factor in four categories. It is present on the form of the Ashram accepted with proper Dharmik rituals, it exists in the form of bhakti when you lovingly offer up everything to Bhagwan, it exists as Yoga when you relinquish all relationships, and it exists as Vedanta when you negate duality. Sanyas is not a religious Sect or cult. It is a method of manifesting the eternal Satya, and that is why it is accepted as an Ashram. Ashram means आश्रय *aashraya* (shelter, refuge). Ashraya means the Brahman that is the substratum of everything, and the refuge of everything.

Only a person who obtains the direct experience that the Brahman and the Atma are one can be a true Sanyasi. Only a true Sanyasi can bring credit to the Sanyas Ashram through the Sanyas Jayanti. Narayana! What more can I say? Celebrate Sanyas Jayanti with great love. Give due respect to Sanyas. May Sanyas reign victorious! By the Gnan of Dharma, upasana, Yoga, and Tattvagnan, and using discrimination, negate the interactive world completely. Look, I am telling you point blank – the life of a Sanyasi is that in which no other is needed to stay alive or be happy. May such a life of a Sanyasi be victorious and live long.

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Varnashram Dharma Mahatvapurna

The Dharma of the Varnashram System Is Important

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Today, people have forgotten the essence of Sanyas, and the need for Sanyas. The fact is that people have forgotten the greatness of Sanyas.

Give your attention to one point. You hear the name of Varnashram. You may even say, on some occasion, ‘I am a Varnashrami.’ Some people may say that they believe in the Varnashram system, and some may not say that.

Some people may wonder what is so important about the Varnashram Dharma. Some people may not even be aware of what it means. The fact is that people no longer give importance to Sanyas because they neither know nor understand what the Varnashram Dharma is. This Varnashram Dharma is a Dharma of withdrawing from worldly activity. It is not a proselytizing Dharma.

I tell you something plainly. The use of the word ‘Hindu’ does not give the same indication as the word ‘Varnashram’. When people say ‘Hindu’, they think about caste and sub-caste; the destruction and division of the Varnashram system. This is why our Mahapurush (great Mahatmas) preferred to use the word ‘Varnashram’, rather than ‘Hindu’. They accept मानवता *maanavataa* (humanity) as a सामान्य धर्म *saamaanya dharma* – the right behavior common to all human beings. To obtain the विशेष *vishe`sha* (special or specific) Dharma, they accept only the Varnashram Dharma. It is only in Varnashram that the highest form of humanity can be seen.

Pay some attention to this. One is the Brahmacharya Ashram. The second is the Grihastha Ashram. The third is the Vanaprastha Ashram, and the fourth is the Sanyas Ashram. This fourth Ashram – the Sanyas Ashram – is called the तूरीय *tureeya*. The Vishwa-Vaishwanara’s Ashram is Brahmacharya. It is also called the Agni Ashram. The Ashram of the Taijas-Hiranyagarbha is the Grihastha Ashram. The Pragya-Ishwara’s Ashram is the Vanaprastha Ashram, and the Turiya-Brahman’s Ashram is Sanyas.

In the Brahmacharya Ashram, the celibate student learns about Dharma. The students are taught how to serve the Guru, and how to study the Vedas. They also learn how to do Dharma according to the Vedas, and how to work within the framework of the Shastras. Whatever we do should be done with discipline and decorum. This principle is introduced into our life from early childhood. When the idea of doing what we like comes into our life, it results in great harm. The purpose of the Brahmacharya Ashram is to ensure that such profligate activities do not come into our life.

Brahmacharya Ashram means inducting something special into all we do; to make our actions Dharma. The purpose is to do things that are in keeping with Dharma, and to let go of all that is contrary to Dharma.

During the Brahmacharya Ashram, a person obtains a proper knowledge about Dharma by studying the Vedas. He forms the habit of doing Dharma by serving his Guru. Since he is continuously occupied in serving his Guru, he gets no scope to do the things he feels like doing. I tell you the truth when I say that nobody does anything according to my wishes. I am compelled to go along with the wishes of other people. I first make myself inclined towards what they want, and then do anything. Well then, my brother, if we live in obedience to the Guru's instructions, we will get into the habit of being inclined to want what He wants. This is what the Brahmachari learns – that we should not indulge ourselves whimsically. We should do what our Guru tells us to do.

It is not only a matter for the Brahmacharya or Grihastha Ashrams; it is a basic truth about our whole life, that we have to do things that are also in keeping with the wishes of other people. If we do only what we want to do, our life will be an unhappy life. A thousand minds are opposed to ours. The minds of our parents are different, and so are the minds of our children. The minds of a husband and wife are different, and those of brothers and sisters are different. The employer's mind is different from the employee's. There is a difference in the minds of friends and neighbors. How many should I enumerate? Every person carries a separate mind.

If you observe carefully, you will know how much difference there is in the way people think, and in what they want. Our mind will never experience peace and happiness unless we learn to break its self-centered willfulness.

So, my brother, in the Brahmacharya Ashram, a person learns to do what the elders want, and to restrict our desires. This develops the habit of self-restraint.

Then, when we have learnt how to control desires, we enter the Grihastha Ashram – the life of a married householder. There are two main factors in the Grihastha Ashram – अर्थ *artha* (material wealth) and काम *kaama* (fulfillment of desires). That means, there is a desire for material wealth and for luxurious living. Those who enter the Grihastha Ashram after completing the Brahmacharya Ashram – that is, after obtaining knowledge about Dharma from the Vedas, and practicing the Dharma of serving the Guru – have self-restraint and decorum in their artha and kama. The main function of the Brahmacharya Ashram is to learn what Dharma actually is. The Dharma learnt during the Brahmacharya Ashram is useful in the Grihastha Ashram.

You can certainly earn wealth and use it for your personal pleasure, but do it within the framework of Dharma. You can certainly accept the Grihastha Ashram, but accept it according to Dharma. A Registered marriage will not do. You will get fed up in two or three years. You will no longer find the husband – or wife – appealing. You will get bored with your spouse.

The marriage that is done according to Dharma will help you to lead an ethical life. Horses and bulls are Registered and sold with proper documentation. Men and women aren't Registered and sold like animals! Look; no matter how beautiful a woman is, or how handsome a man is, they are not accepted only for their looks or virtues. It has to be seen whether they are acceptable by Dharma or not.

All the wealth we want to earn in the Grihastha Ashram, or the sensual pleasures we want to obtain, must be within the stipulated norms. People are not controlled by laws or by the Police. It is the Dharma in the heart that keeps people controlled. It is this Dharma that tells a man, 'This woman is not suitable for your enjoyment.' 'This food is not proper for you to eat.' 'This action is a wrong action.'

When the संस्कार *sanskaara* (subconscious impression) of Dharma is present in our antahkaran (fourfold mind), when the sanskara of Brahmacharya is present, then we have the power to control wrong desires. The practice of Dharma in the Brahmacharya Ashram makes a Grihastha a Dharmatma (pious person). In it, you can earn wealth according to Dharma. You can enjoy life in keeping with Dharma.

Actually, your Brahmacharya Ashram has not been followed correctly. That is why your Grihastha Ashram has become so sullied that you are unable to grasp the significance of tyaaga (giving up; renouncing), or Sanyas. The extent of attachment to wealth and worldly pleasures in your life is too strong to permit more profound considerations. Your life has become enslaved by your attachment to wealth and worldly considerations. The Grihastha Ashram is lived properly only when the person has practiced Dharma in the Brahmacharya Ashram before entering the Grihastha Ashram.

After the Grihastha Ashram comes the Vanaprastha Ashram. The practice of तपस्या *tapasyaa* (asceticism) is called the Vanaprastha Ashram. When the Grihasthas earn wealth and enjoy worldly pleasures in keeping with Dharma, they will be able to lead a life of austerity in the Vanaprastha Ashram. The Grihastha of today is prepared to die, but he is not prepared to let go of money. People die a slow death, but the desire for worldly pleasures lives on.

The teeth break, and people make false teeth for their continued enjoyment of life. They do not get false teeth for the sake of good health; they can have good health even without false teeth. The false teeth are made so that they can enjoy worldly pleasures. Thus we see that even when Bhagwan sends us an opportunity to give up some worldly pleasures, we do not take advantage of it. We continue to remain engrossed in worldly pleasures and indulgences.

A man comes and tells me, 'Maharaj, please give me वैराग्य *vairagya* (detachment). This is all I want now – to be detached!' Now, what am I to say? The Ishwara heaps situations for detachment on your head every day. Every day He creates some situation where you are taunted by your wife, sons, or brothers. Yet you are so lacking in understanding that you fail to realize that this situation is created by Bhagwan, to give

you renunciation. Death comes every day. Rebellion comes every day. You face betrayal every day. Every day there are incidents that cause disappointment and depression. Narayana! In spite of this, people have no vairagya. The Ishwara gives vairagya, but people do not accept this वरदान *varadaana* (boon of Grace) as a *varadaan*. On the contrary, they battle against it. The fact is that people are inclined towards worldly activities.

The Vanaprastha Ashram comes after the Grihastha Ashram so that we can lead a life of *tyaaga-tapasyaa* (giving up, and living in austerity), and become self-reliant. The life of a Vanaprasthi is a life of independence. To go into the woods and bring back the fruits and flowers; to go to the fields or the market and gather up the grains of food we need. We do not ask anyone for anything. We do not depend upon others. We practice asceticism and austerity. We endure the cold and the heat and the rain. All these discomforts are to be endured with equanimity. We should give up everything that is redundant, and lead a life of independence.

The Brahmacharya Ashram is meant to control our actions. The Grihastha Ashram is meant to control wealth and self-indulgence. Restraint dominates these two Ashrams. In the Vanaprastha Ashram the thrust is on practice. The habit of austerity is to be cultivated. After that comes giving up; and that is called ‘Sanyas.’ This Sanyas Ashram is for obtaining the essence of अमृत *amrita* (elixir) through *tyaga*.

‘Sanyas is not just donning saffron robes.’ That is quite true. However, some sign is needed for people to understand that this is a त्यागी *tyaagi* (one who has given up worldly considerations). This is a convenience for people. The person who wears a saffron robe gets certain facilities, but even those who want to render service to a Sanyasi find it convenient to identify a Sanyasi. They can feel free to offer food, clothes, and service. We should also think about their convenience.

Sanyas is an Ashram of *tyaga*. People, who don’t practice Dharma, are unrestrained in the way they make money or enjoy themselves, and know nothing about austerities and asceticism, will consider Sanyas to be meaningless. They will think that Sanyas is quite unnecessary.

All the worldly people are engrossed in increasing the world. They have only one goal – to make the world increase; a greater expansion of worldly facilities. They say, ‘Wealth should increase, luxuries should increase, fame should increase.’ People who are engrossed in worldly expansion have no understanding about the greatness of Sanyas. They will show that they are in no way inferior to anyone else. I understand their viewpoint, also. When these people see, संन्यासिनोऽपि दृश्यन्ते दैव सुदूषिताशयात्। ‘*Sannyaasinopi drishyante` daiva sandooshiyaashayaat,*’ then they think that Sanyas is meaningless. They see Sanyasis who are as avid for wealth as they are. They see Sanyasis who are equally attached to luxuries and sensual pleasures. Then they compare themselves with these Sanyasis and say, ‘You are just like us. We are not inferior to you

in any way.' I know, and appreciate, the way they feel. However, this is with regard to the faulty Sanyasis. The true Sanyasi has a bright inner vision.

There are three things that should not be present in a Sanyasi. One is that a Sanyasi should never have a desire to live in any particular place. Whenever there is a legal tussle over any place, it is contrary to the Sanyas Dharma.

The second point is that a Sanyasi should not have any desire for any item of food or drink. Any weakness for any item is unsuitable for the Sanyas Dharma.

The third point is not having any urge for a particular companion. To think, 'This person should always stay with me, the way a husband and wife are always together,' is contrary to the Sanyas Dharma. There should be no attachment to anyone.

Thus, a Sanyasi should have no attachment for any place, object, or person. A Sanyasi gives up all these three types of attachments, and wanders about. The entire earth is his abode. All the people in the world are his friends. He can sustain himself in any manner. A true Sanyasi wanders on the earth without expecting anything from anyone, and is completely unattached.

The fact is that the Vanaprastha Ashram has vanished, and the Grihastha Ashram is also not lived in the right way. People make money by unethical means. They accumulate wealth that is not theirs by right. Their earning is unprincipled, and their hoarding is unlimited.

Just yesterday, or the day before, a gentleman told me, 'Maharaj, there should be some rule that I should keep only a certain amount of wealth. I will do दान *daan* (charity) of the amount that exceeds this limit.' Is there any such limit? Think about your own life! This gentleman said, 'If I earn one lakh in a year, I will give ten percent of it in charity. If I earn two lakhs, I will donate fifteen percent. If I earn three lakhs, I will give away twenty percent.'

The meaning of this is that we know how to earn wealth, and we know how to keep it. We sway as we carry the burden of accumulation on our head.

Our Seths will be sitting here in the discourse, isn't it? Yes! They will surely be present. What kind of daan do they do? One Mahatma told me how the Seths do daan. He told me, 'In the houses of the Seths, there is a great lake that is miles long and wide, and very, very deep. It is filled with the water of wealth. When they do charity, they sit on the edge of their lake, and dip a blade of grass into the water. Then they take out the blade of grass and sprinkle a drop of water. 'Look!' they say, 'My name should be printed in the papers. People should know how wealthy I am, and how much I give in charity.'

Now, tell me! The daan they do is like the tip of a sewing needle, and the fame they seek is that of being the greatest daani (donor)!

Sanyas Jayanti does not mean that one man became a Sanyasi. Sanyas Jayanti is a victory call of the Varnashram Dharma. The glory of the Varnashram Dharma is the glory of Sanyas. Unless Sanyas Dharma is victorious, our Varnashram Dharma will be

lost. Today's education system makes no mention of the Varnashram Dharma. What is the Varna Dharma?

प्रवृत्तिनियामको वर्णधर्मः निवृत्तिपोषकश्चापरः ।

Pravrittiniyaamako varnadharmah nivrittiposhakashchaaparah.

That, which restrains unbridled behavior, is called the Varna Dharma. Today, the biggest consideration is, 'Everything should be done the way I want.' People say, 'What he did was all right, but why didn't he do it the way I wanted?'

There is a book that is about two thousand years old. In it, there is a reference to श्वश्रु सुभगा न्याय 'Shvashru subhaga nyaaya.' A Sanyasi went to someone's house to beg for his food. He stood at the door, and called out, 'Narayana Hari!' The young daughter-in-law of the house came out. She folded her hands respectfully and said, 'Maharaj, the rotis are not yet ready.' Babaji went away.

When he had walked one or two miles, he met the mother-in-law. 'Maharaj', she said, 'Didn't you go to our house to get rotis?'

'I did go to your house,' he replied.

'Then what happened, Maharaj?' she asked.

'Your daughter-in-law folded her hands and told me that the rotis were not ready yet.'

Maharaj!' said the mother-in-law, 'what right does she have to say that the rotis are not yet ready? Please come with me. Please come back to my house.'

The mother-in-law caught the hand of the Sanyasi and made him walk back two miles to her house. When they reached the house, she first rebuked her daughter-in-law sharply. 'Bahu! What right do you have to tell Maharaj that the rotis are not ready yet?' After scolding the younger woman, she went into the house. Babaji waited outside, thinking that she would bring rotis for him. However, what happened was that the mother-in-law went around the house. Then she came out and said, 'Maharaj, the rotis are not ready yet.' Babaji started to walk away.

Now, see – what is this? Tell me, what difference was there in what the two women said? Didn't they both say the same thing? The point is that, in the opinion of the mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law did not have the right to say that the rotis were not ready!

We see that today people create friction saying, 'He may have done the right thing, but why didn't he do it the way I wanted?' Is this not the case? All the friction in the present times is because each person sits holding on to his own mind, saying, 'Why weren't things done the way I wanted?'

In the Brahmacharya Ashram, a person eradicates his personal preference, and establishes the preference of totality. Earlier, boys used to stay away from their parents during the Brahmacharya Ashram. They would bathe every morning, afternoon and evening. They did the daily rituals of Sandhya Vandan and the fire worship. They would study, and go to beg for their food. They had to listen to abuses, and they had to work hard. By living such a life in the Brahmacharya Ashram, a foundation was built for the

Grihastha Ashram that contained an inclination for निवृत्ति *nivritti* (withdrawal from worldly activities).

No matter how much wealth people earn today, and no matter how many luxuries and indulgences they enjoy, they do not have the ability to control their mind. In fact, people go to the extent of saying, 'It is a demand of nature; it is natural.' They want the woman who is beautiful, or the man who is handsome. They want food that is tasty and the house that is lovely. They want all the good clothes. 'All the good things in the world should belong to me. Nobody else should get anything. I am the Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu who enjoys every beautiful object in the world.' हिरण्याक्षायते *Hiranyaakshaayate*. Today, every person has become another Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakashipu. (Hiranyaksha means one whose eyes are always on gold, and Hiranyakashipu means one who sleeps on a bed of gold.) The fact is that the cause of the sorry state of things is the breaking of the system of the Varnashram Dharma.

When a person's Brahmacharya Ashram is proper, he will also have a proper Grihastha Ashram. He will practice self-restraint in his conjugal life. He will not succumb to lust at random. He will adhere to the proper days for having a conjugal relationship with his wife. He will earn wealth, but ethically. He will keep wealth and use it for his comfort, but with decorum. He will distribute his wealth as ordained by Dharma. His earning, accumulation, and spending will all be done in accordance to Dharma.

Look, it is not that there is a proper method only in earning and accumulating. There is a proper method even in how it should be spent. Just as there is a tap that brings water into the house, and there is a tank for storing it, there is also a drain by which water goes out. In the same way, there is a method to earn wealth and bring it into the house; there is a proper arrangement for keeping it and using it; and there is also a path by which it is distributed and sent out of the house.

Just as when water comes in and goes out of the house, there should be a way out for the wealth that comes into the house. If you go on hoarding all the wealth you get, you will have to face the fear of its being taken away by either the King, or a thief, or an enemy. राजतः खेरतः शत्रोः '*Raajatah chauratah shatro.*' When the danger confronts you, you will start shouting that injustice is being done to you. You will accuse people of cheating you. My brother, were you every absolutely pure in your dealings? You, too, earned wealth by unfair means. You stole an umbrella and brought it home. When someone else stole it, you made a report to the Police. My brother, why didn't you report it to the Police when you stole it?

A great deal of what is wrong in today's world is because people are not giving due importance to the Varnashram Dharma. If every person kept in mind the thought that later on he will be living according to the Vanaprastha Ashram, he would keep to the Dharma of the Grihastha Ashram. If every person felt that he has to be self-reliant in his old age, he would not become so dependent on worldly factors. When a married

householder is conscious that he will be leaving the house when his son and daughter-in-law begin to manage everything, he will not be so attached to his house and family. When a person practices living in the Grihastha Ashram as he should, he will be able to practice the proper tyaga-tapasya in the Vanaprastha Ashram.

If a person's attachment to wealth and indulgence continues to rise during the Grihastha Ashram, his married life will also become a burden. When his daughters-in-law and sons begin to rule the household, and misbehave with him – or ask him to go and live somewhere else – he will say, 'Oh! My son and daughter-in-law don't listen to me.' His own life is bound to luxuries and indulgencies. Tell me, now, how will he be able to lead a life of austerity?

When the son and daughter-in-law take charge of things, a person should voluntarily leave the house and lead a life of austerity. That will be possible only if he has followed the Dharma of the Grihastha Ashram properly. If a person is always conscious that he will give up everything one day, he will never get attached to anything in this world. A person who thinks, 'One day I will give up all that I am earning and enjoying,' will live in the Grihastha Ashram with great purity. He will be conscious of ultimately giving up everything. He will not spoil his life. He will never be controlled by others. It is a very lofty expansion of life to keep giving up things for others to take over. It is an extremely elevated outlook when somebody thinks that others should also lead lives that are happy and simple.

The fact is that the Sanyas Ashram has no scope for any status. You see, the poor people see that the true life is a life of tyaga. 'So what if the Ishwara has placed us in a situation of austerity? We will destroy our desires and elevate our lives by our tyaga (of worldly advantages)'. Those who are poor are already placed in a condition of tyaga. Their desires are the cause of their sorrow. They can reach the lofty position of a Mahatma with renunciation by simply letting go of their desires.

The wealthy people are made aware that great wealth is not needed for happiness. They see how happy and carefree the Sanyasis are, who have no wealth at all. They have no hut to live in, yet they are happy. They sleep on the ground, yet they are happy. They eat begged food, yet they are happy. They remain happy even if they have no clothes to wear and go about in rags. They are happy even though they have no wife or son.

When the wealthy people see the Sanyas Ashram, they understand that they do not need wealth to be happy. They realize that people who have no wealth can be happy. If the Sanyas Ashram does not continue, people will think that only the wealthy can be happy. Then there will be a tussle for wealth between the rich and the poor. There will be strife, and violent clashes. Just as Communism arose from the rule of the Czars, the indication in present times is a speedy clash between the wealthy and the impoverished. This is the current situation.

To tell the truth, all perplexities that the world faces today, can be resolved if the Varnashram Dharma is followed. You can meet me sometime and discuss every current

problems. I can explain every point separately to you. The problem of education is separate. The problem of poverty is separate. The problem of irrigation is separate. The problem of food production is separate. If the Ashram Dharma had been followed properly, the current food shortage would have been solved by the fasts people would have kept. Just by fasting, people would have been able to overcome the shortage of grain, and have had a surplus. A great amount of grain is saved because we fast on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and on special dates of the lunar calendar, like the eleventh day, the full moon and no-moon.

Had the Ashram Dharma been followed, the food people need to beg for would also have been saved. There would be no friction between the rich and the poor. Income levels would not have led to quarreling. People would not turn to violence. All people would have been busy with their allotted tasks.

This laxness in the Ashram Dharma is what has caused all the injustice and ill-will. By the Grace of the Ishwara, these social evils can be removed by following the Ashram Dharma.

The meaning of Sanyas Jayanti is not that my Sanyas should be celebrated, or that today's Sanyas Jayanti should be glorious. The meaning of Sanyas Jayanti is that the Sanyas Ashram should regain its importance. It should regain its position. It should not be imprisoned in accumulation and indulgence. It should not be left in the hands of people who are ineligible.

Eligible people say, 'We are Sanyasis at heart anyway.' I tell them, 'Please don't remain a hidden Sanyasi. Become a proper Sanyasi and show people.' Isn't it? You have gathered a lot, and indulged enough! Now let those people also come into the Sanyas Ashram. Just come and see.

There was a very good Mahatma. He was a tyagi Mahapurush. He was walking along the river, and came to one place. The local people developed great faith and reverence for him. 'He is an extremely tyagi Mahatma,' they said. 'He is absolutely carefree. He is always established in his essence.'

The praises reached the King. The King went to the Mahatma. He was also filled with faith and respect. He took a mantra from the Mahatma and became his disciple. 'Maharaj,' said the King, 'Now you please continue to live here.' He gave his own house to the Mahatma to stay in. All the luxuries and conveniences that are used by the wealthy aristocrats gradually came to the house. Electricity was connected. An air-conditioner was installed.

The Mahatma began to live there. Six or seven months passed by. One day the King came there. 'Maharaj,' he said, 'what is the difference between you and me? We are the same.'

'Yes,' said the Mahatma. 'It is true, Rajan. From the viewpoint of the essence, there is no difference. You and I are the same. Your vision of the essence has been awakened. Mine has disappeared.'

A little later, the Mahatma got up. ‘Raja, come,’ he said. ‘Let us take a walk on the riverside.’

‘Yes, Maharaj,’ said the King, ‘let us go.’

They walked for a mile, then two miles, then three miles. The Mahatma walked on steadily.

‘Maharaj,’ said the King, ‘We have come a long distance. Let us turn back.’

‘Look, Rajan,’ said the Mahatma. ‘I have a wish today, to make a trip to the Himalaya. Why don’t you come with me?’

‘Maharaj, how can I go with you?’ asked the King. ‘I will have to take permission. I will have to discuss it with my wife. I will have to make arrangements for my family and the Government in my absence. How can I just go off with you?’

‘No, Raja Saheb,’ said the Mahatma. ‘What difference is there between me and you? You and I are absolutely the same. Just as I am going off, why don’t you go off, too?’

‘No, Maharaj,’ replied the King. ‘For me, that is not possible. I can’t imagine just going off like that. The representative of the British stays in my Kingdom. I must get his permission before crossing over the boundaries of my Kingdom.’

‘Raja Saheb, now you remain here. Be happy. I am going on a journey to the Himalaya. You and I are absolutely the same, but you remain within this boundary, and I am going beyond it.’

My brother, this talk of being the same is empty bragging. We are not the same as far as wealth is concerned. We are not the same as far as indulgences are concerned. We are not the same as far as Dharma is concerned. We do not have the same kind of lifestyle. This talk of sameness is nothing but empty words.

Look; the fact is that only the Sanyas Ashram is a Turiya Brahman that makes the Vanaprastha, Grihastha and Brahmacharya Ashrams remain in their positions. All these three Ashrams remain as they should be. The Vanaprastha Ashram is self-reliant. It is the Ishwara Dharma. To be independent is the Ishwara Dharma.

In the Grihastha Ashram there are two main Purusharthas (achievements). One is the Moksha Purushartha (the achievement of liberation), and the other is the Bhoga Purushartha (the achievement of worldly pleasures). The Moksha Purushartha belongs to the Sanyas Ashram. It is the Purushartha of the Sanyasi. This is the supreme achievement. There is no need to create confusion in it.

To offer Bhoga (food) to Bhagwan before eating a good meal is a part of the Vaishnav Dharma. It is not a part of the Ashram Dharma to offer food to Bhagwan and then have a sumptuous meal. This is the Vaishnav Dharma. It is the Shaiva Dharma. Sanyas Dharma is quite different.

The Sanyas Dharma is like the Turiya Brahman – absolutely unattached. It is non-dual. In the Grihastha Ashram, Dharma is needed to achieve the Bhoga Purushartha, and Dharma is also needed for Moksha. Yes! Dharma keeps bhoga within the limits of decorum. Otherwise, people would become completely wild. They would do wrong acts

and be put into prison. They would be sentenced to death by hanging. All of society would be destroyed.

The person who earns wealth according to Dharma, and enjoys bhoga that is not contrary to Dharma, gets the proper pleasures, and is happy. When a person earns, and lives according to Dharma, his antahkaran is purified, and he obtains Moksha.

Then, my brother, there is the Purushartha of Kama (fulfillment of desires) that is savored by people. There is a Moksha Purushartha that is the essence of Paramananda (supreme bliss). The Artha Purushartha (the achievement of worldly wealth) that is obtained by Dharma gives pleasures in this life and in lofty lands after death. The wealth that is acquired without Dharma can only give pleasures in this life. It is not a method by which a person can obtain happiness after death. Bhoga is a pleasure that can be obtained in this world, and also in the realms after death. A person gets bhoga in this life, in Heaven, and also in his next birth. Moksha is the supreme happiness. This is the state of the four Purusharthas of Artha-Dharma-Kama-Moksha.

Now, Maharaj, when we go to any Satsang-samaroha (a gathering where many Mahatmas give discourses) it happens sometimes that the organizers invite ineligible youngsters to sit with us, and give sermons on Dharma. It seems as though the organizers want to ridicule us by saying, ‘Look! These youngsters’ talks are superior to yours! Their voices are very sweet. Their style is very appealing.’

Tell me, now! On one hand is a lifetime of the study of Dharma; not only in this lifetime, but also in several past births of श्रवण-मनन-निदिध्यासन *shravana-manana-nididhyaasana* (Yogic methods of obtaining Gnan) about the essence of the Brahman. On the other hand, are these half-baked youngsters who merely repeat what they have memorized. These youngsters have merely been taught the things they speak about. They don’t give much importance to these matters. When a person says something he has memorized, there is only an element of entertainment involved. The intellect that gives importance to Dharma, to Moksha, and to the Ashrams, is what gives salvation.

Today, on this auspicious occasion of Sanyas Jayanti, I ask you to understand and grasp the importance of the system of the Varnashram Dharma. Please awaken a respect for this system. Your active cooperation and support is very important. Through the importance and support you give this system, you can bring the Varnashram Dharma back to its place in society.

Om.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Hamare Sanyas Ke Char Roopa.

The Four Forms of My Sanyas.

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Every day you listen to serious talks. Today, I will tell you something light. There should be an occasional change in the flavoring, isn't it?

My Sanyas Jayanti began with a lie. What was the lie? I was living in an undeveloped region in Madhya Pradesh. Thakur Saheb (the owner of the region) said, 'Swamiji, you are staying with me. I want to have a function honor – some celebration – and invite people from the city.' He began to discuss what important celebration should be held.

Shri Dwarika Prasad Shastri was with us. He advised the Thakur Saheb. 'Swamiji had taken Sanyas on the eleventh day of the Magh-shukla. This day should be celebrated as Swamiji's birthday.'

Leaflets were printed, announcing that festivities would be held on Magh-shukla ekadashi. I think that some three or four thousand people arrived from the nearby city. I had to sit on an elephant to go to the village that was thirty-five miles into the jungle. I returned by bullock cart. It was a dense forest. The Thakur Saheb is still living. The British Government had given him a Certificate, honoring him. The Governor salutes him when this certificate is shown to him. The Governor bows to Thakur Saheb.

This is how this celebration started. The next time, I told them, 'Don't write birthday; write Sanyas Jayanti.'

I will now tell you something about Sanyas. Regarding the matter of a Sanyasi's dress, the rules of the Shastras are extremely rigid. It is nice that you all are quite happy to accept that white clothes and red robes are the same – what is there in the color? It is enough that you are satisfied to think that color makes no difference. Actually, everything is the same, but the day you have to don the garb of a Sanyasi, there will be very few who are prepared to do so. This is something you know, isn't it?

Regarding the dress of Sanyas, one point is that it is mentioned in the Shastras that neither the Vanaprastha nor the Sanyas Ashram should be kept in the Kali Yuga (the age called Kali, when negative tends flourish). It is written that nobody should accept the Vanaprastha Ashram. Nor should anybody accept the Sanyas Ashram. In the Kali Yuga, only the Brahmacharya Ashram and Grihastha Ashram should be followed. The first step was giving a beating to this age!

Now see the second point. Bhagwan Shankaracharya found an ancient statement, and said, यावद् वेदाः कलौ युगे 'Yaavad ve`daah kalau yuge'. The Vanaprastha and Sanyas Ashrams should be kept as long as the sun and the moon exist, the Vedas exist, and the Varnashram system exists. The Ashrams should not be allowed to disappear. This is the arrangement made by Bhagwan Shankaracharya. At that time, the Sanyas Ashram of the

Buddhists was strongly prevalent. The Buddhists do not accept the Vedas. Therefore, Bhagwan Shankaracharya revived the Vedic Sanyas Ashram.

After that, Bhagwan Shankaracharya made elaborate arrangements for the Sanyas Ashram. Even today, if anyone wants to be a Dandi Swami (a wandering Monk who carries a staff to indicate his status), it is necessary that he is born a Brahmin. The rule is that unless a man is born in a Brahmin family, he will not be made a Dandi Swami.

Well, even if they make a Brahmin a Dandi swami, it is not the method prescribed in the Shastras. It is essential that he has the aptitude and qualities needed to be a Dandi Swami. The fourth Ashram – Sanyas – is accepted only if he has वैराग्य *vairagya* (detachment), जिज्ञासा *jigyaasaa* (an urge to know the ultimate truth), or तत्त्वज्ञान *tattvagnana* (knowledge of the essence of the Brahman). Also, he should have practiced the first three Ashrams properly. Only then is he qualified to become a Dandi swami. Don't think that we are all permitted to buy saffron color worth one paisa, and dye our robes!

नारि मुई गृह संपति नासी।
मूड़ मुड़ाइ भये संन्यासी॥
ते बिप्रन्ह सन आपु पुजावहिं।
उभय लोक निज हाथ नसावहिं॥

*Naari muyee griha sampati naasee,
Mooda mudaayi bhaye` sannyaasee.
Te` vipranha sana aapu pujaahin,
Ubhaya loka nija haatha nasaavahin.*

(There are people who shave their heads and become Sanyasis when their wife dies and they lose their wealth. They sit with the Brahmins and accept reverence under a false pretext. They wash their hands of salvation.)

The Sanyas Ashram is not meant for all and sundry. What we call the Sanyas Ashram is certainly not meant for all people. Narayana! It is difficult to find more than five or seven eligible people at a time, in the entire country. This Sanyas Ashram is not meant for just anyone becoming a Babaji. It is something that is very superior, and is appropriate for a very few. Yes! Very well; let us now let go of this subject. I had received these clothes of Sanyas from Swami Brahmanand Saraswati, who was the head of the Jyotish Peeth at that time.

Now I will tell you something about before this. Before this, I had worshipped Bhagwan Shri Krishna to the best of my power and ability, while living at home. Bhagwan Shri Krishna had given me an indication that the Atma and the Brahman are one. The Gnan – that the Atma and the Brahman are one – is the actually Sanyas, you know!

You don't even notice the fruit of this ब्रह्मात्मैक्य बोध *brahmaatmaikya bodha* (the knowledge that the Brahman and the Atma are one). When our Atma becomes the Brahman, this whole world will not be separate from the Brahman, will it?

Atma=Brahman. Brahman=the world. Therefore, Atma=the world. Isn't it? This is the law of calculation. The Atma is the Brahman, and the Brahman is the world, and therefore, the Atma is the world. The entire Creation is our essence. Yes!

The main form of Sanyas is that in one way, it is the Brahman. It is the non-dual substratum of everything. In one form, it is the unaffected observer, the असंग द्रष्टा *asanga drashtaa*, the Atma. And in one form, it is everything – सर्वात्मा *sarvaatmaa* – the Atma of all. It is in everything, but is separate from everything. It is separate from everything but is everything. This is what the Dharma of Sanyas is shown to be.

Now I will tell you something about the grammar. Please pay attention to this. सं 'Sam' means 'properly'. नि 'Ni' means नितरां *nitaraam*, meaning, 'fully'. आसनं 'Aasanam' means निक्षेपः *nikshe`pah*, meaning, 'to throw away' or, 'to give up.'

Sanyas means, to give up the अनात्म वस्तु *anaatma vastu* (that which is not the Atma) properly and fully. It means to decide, for once and for all, that it is *mithyaa* – it is a relative truth. In it, there is nothing that opposes awareness. The anatma vastu is a perception, like a dream.

'Sam' means properly, 'ni' means fully, and आसनं 'aasanam' means to be firmly established. Hence, Sanyas means to be well and truly established in the essence of the Atma. It means to be established firmly in the experience that the Atma is the Brahman. These are the आध्यात्मिक *aadhyaatmika* (metaphysical) meanings of Sanyas.

सं *San* means sat, meaning the Paramatma.

न्यासः *Nyaasah* means to put inside.

Sanyas means सति *sati*+ न्यासः *nyaasah*. To put one's self into the Paramatma.

Sam means sat, meaning the Paramatma. Nyaasa means धरोहर *dharohara* – something that belongs to another and is given to you for safe-keeping.

Sanyas means सतोः परमेश्वरस्य न्यासः *sato`h parame`shvarasya nyaasah*. To use the dharohar of the Paramatma in His service.

Who is a Sanyasi? A Sanyasi is the person who fully and properly gives up everything that is not the Atma. He decides that the anatma vastu is a perception, like a dream. He does not get deluded by the interactive world, thinking it to be real. He knows with full certainty that only the Atma is the ultimate truth. It is existence.

A Sanyasi is a person who is fully and properly established in his essence, the Parabrahma Paramatma. He is unshakeable in the knowledge that his essence is the Brahman, it is indivisible, non-dual, unattached, and is pure existence, consciousness and bliss.

A Sanyasi is one who merges his self into the Paramatma. He identifies with the Paramatma. A Sanyasi is the one who believes that everything that he has and gets, belongs to the Paramatma, and he uses it in the service of the Paramatma. Please learn to recognize the characteristics of a Sanyasi by this analysis of the word 'Sanyas'.

Narayana! Now I will tell you another point. Please listen attentively. Even if the Devta (presiding deity or demigod) gives Gnan, you should not depend upon him. Our desires are helpful in our getting a darshan (vision) of the Devta. We cannot get the darshan of a Devta without the help of our desires. When the Devta says something, he sits astride the desire of the bhakta and says it. Therefore, it is not possible to know whether the Devta's words are authentic or not.

Even after the Devta has said something to you, you should get it confirmed by a Sant (Saint), because a Sant is free of desires. If you get a dream about undertaking some business transaction, you should not do it. It is possible that it comes true today, but goes wrong tomorrow. Then you may become bankrupt, isn't it?

Then, what should be done? You should go to a Sant and ask him, 'Did the Devta give me this Gnan, or was the dream prompted by my own desire? Did my Devta tell me what is correct?' The Sant is free of desire. With his divine speech, he gives you the vision of Gnan illuminated by the purity of his mind. This will enable you to discriminate between your own desires and the words of the Devta.

In 1931, Swami Shankaranandji Maharaj told me, 'As a दक्षिणा *dakshinaa* (monetary gift given to a Brahmin or a Monk), I give you the Gnan that the Atma and the Brahman are one.' This was done. His point was confirmed.

After that, I took refuge at the feet of Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj. I am unable to describe all the methods of logic and reasoning he taught me. He taught me methods of मनन *manan* (thinking deeply) that were simply wonderful! The experiences he spoke about are beyond description, and cannot be explained. You see, Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj gave clarity to my experience that the Brahman and the Atma were one. He removed every ambiguity and uncertainty of mine by his explanations, logic, questions and answers. He convinced me beyond doubt that I am the Brahman.

I will tell you one thing. The साधक *saadhak* (spiritual seekers) who live in the cities want to remove the विकल्प *vikshe'pa* (mental disturbances), or they want to quiet their minds. All right; they also want to do आवरण-भंग *aavarana-bhanga* (removing the veil of nescience that hides the Brahman). If they are जिज्ञासु *jigyaasu* (seekers of the ultimate truth) they want to remove the avaran. If they love peace, they want to remove mental disturbances.

However, they completely neglect what they should remove first of all. They pay no attention to the मल-दोष *mala-dosha* (the fault of mental impurities). The removal of desires is the main thing. Mal means desires. Any desire a person has is called 'mal'. Mal-dosha means both bad desires as well as good ones. The mental movements cannot be pure until the mind becomes free of all desires.

You see, mal is something separate, vikshep is something separate, and the avaran is something separate. If someone tries to remove vikshep and avaran before removing mal, it is possible that he may succeed. I do not object, the avaran-bhang can take place.

It is possible that someone succeeds in achieving the avaran-bhang without achieving the removal of vikshep. I do not deny that it can be done. However, the अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (fourfold mind or subtle body) will not be purified until mal is expunged.

Even if you succeed in quieting your mind for an hour or two, the wrong desires will keep coming back into your life. They will compel you into wrong, unethical actions. These wrong desires cannot be discarded. The present times being what they are, if the defect of wrong desires is removed, it will take only a few minutes for the vikshep to be removed. The avaran-bhang will be even faster. Yes! I snap my fingers and remove the veil of nescience. I have the ability to do avaran-bhang. If any sadhak removes his mal and vikshep and then comes to me, I can remove his nescience in a split second.

My brother, use some method for removing your defect (of the impurities in your antahkaran). Sit quietly, to remove the mental disturbances. Look, you may do अहंग्रह उपासना *ahangraha upaasanaa* (worship the Atma within), or you may do the इदंग्रह उपासना *idamgraha upaasanaa* (worshipping the Brahman in all). You may do meditation. Use any method, but let the love in your heart be attached to your Guru. Your mind is attached to so many worldly things – let it get attached to the Paramatma.

Instead of singing the glories of wealth, sing the glories of Govind. Your focus should shift from the world to the Supreme. Oh, my brother, if it embarrasses you to speak the name of Govind, say, भज आत्मानं, भज आत्मानं, भज आत्मानं मूढमते ‘*Bhaja aatmaanam, bhaja aatmaanam, bhaja aatmaanam moodha mate*’.(Sing the praises of the Atma, you foolish mind!)

If you cannot even feel the Atma, sing, भज द्रष्टारं ‘*Bhaja drashtaaram*’ (the praises of the unaffected observer – the Atma, or the Brahman). Or else say, भज साक्षिणं ‘*Bhaja saaksheenam*’ (the inner witness). Narayana! Do something worthwhile, isn’t it? By whichever method, your love must move from the outer to the inner.

If you remove your mal and come to me, I will remove your vikshep in just five minutes. If you have removed even the vikshep, I will do your avaran-bhang with a snap of my fingers. The time it takes to snap my fingers, is all the time it will take for your nescience to be removed.

I say this in public – if you have done the साधन *saadhan* (effort for spiritual progress) for removing your mal, I will quiet your vikshep in just five minutes, and do your avaran-bhang in a split second. The sound of the snapping of my fingers has the capacity to do the avaran-bhang. However, if the mal is not removed, then what can the snapping of my fingers do? You can keep listening to the sound of the loud speakers for yours, but you will achieve nothing, isn’t it?

Narayana! Just take my Sanyas in four different forms. Look, I had श्रद्धा *shraddhaa* (faith with reverence) for Bhagwan. I had experiences that were connected to my shraddha. Swami Shankaranandji Maharaj removed the shraddha. He made it pure experience.

Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj gave me the capacity to reason in a way by which I could understand other people. There is a difference between the two developments, isn't there?

Swami Brahmanand Saraswati gave me these saffron garments. Thus, take my Sanyas in four forms.

1. Adhidaivik (divine) Sanyas: Bhagwan Shri Krishna.
2. Adhyatmik (metaphysical) Sanyas: Swami Shankaranandji Maharaj.
3. Yauktik (logical) Sanyas: Shri Udiya Babaji Maharaj.
4. Vyavharik (practical) Sanyas: Swami Brahmanand Saraswati.

All right, enough for today. ॐ नमो नारायण *Om namo naaraayana!*

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Vah Sanyasi Nahin, Jo....

He is Not a Sanyasi, Who

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

What is this संन्यासोत्सव *sannyaasotsava* – the celebration of Sanyas? Look, the celebrating the day of our birth is common. What is it called? Birthdays! Yes! Actually, celebrating the day we were born is also a celebration of Sanyas. Those who celebrate don't understand this. They celebrate that this was the day we escaped from other योनि *yonis* (planes of existence), and came into a human body. We were freed from the forms of various animals, birds, Devtas, Demons, and we came into a human form. Tell me now; what is the Sanyas in this?

The Sanyas in this is that the forms of animals, birds, ants, bedbugs, snakes, scorpions, etc have all been given up. By the Grace of the Ishwara, good fortune, and good deeds, we have been released from other births and have received a human birth. The human form is साधन-धाम मोच्छ कर द्वारा *saadhan-dhaam mochha kara dvaara* – it is a place for sadhan (effort for spiritual progress) and the doorway to liberation.

Why, my brother, marriage anniversaries are also celebrated. It is a matter of happiness. Earlier, a man was inclined towards a thousand women, and a woman was inclined towards a thousand men. The mind stood ready with the वरमाला *varamaala* (the garland used when a woman selects her bridegroom). This was the day the varamala was placed round the neck of one man. The hand was caught by one hand. Now, there will be no such relationships with any other. Other people are free. This day onwards, we became free of any attraction towards any other lady or gentleman. This is the cause for celebrating.

Look, the Muslims even have a celebration of death. Do you know why? It is because the man has become a Mussalman. What happens when someone becomes a Mussalman? Mohammed Saheb gives him a recommendation, and the person who believes in Islam goes only to Bahishta (Heaven). It is the belief of Muslims that a person who dies as a Mussalman does not go to Dokhaj (Hell); he goes only to Bahishta. That is why he is happy even in death.

All right; even among Sadhus, we observe the celebration of निर्वाण *nirvaana* (escape from this world), that we will not have to come into any worldly body again.

I am telling you one thing. My name is there as the President of about fifteen Trusts. At Mathura, there is the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Trust. At Rishikesh there is the Swargashram Trust. At Bombay, there are the Prempuri Ashram Trust and the Satsahitya Prakashan Trust. The Janata Janardan Trust is here in Bombay and also at Delhi. At Vrindavan there is the Anand Vrindavan Trust and Lokhit Pranyas. I am the

President of all these. I have been the President of Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj Trust for the past thirty years.

Then, there is the Ved Niketan, and the Bharat Sadhu Samaj. I also head a Trust at Kanpur. Thus, my name is given as President in about fifteen Trusts. There is a Trust at Auriya in which I hold Veto power – they cannot do anything without my approval.

The reason I am telling you all this is that in the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Trust (which also has a Guest House), I am the President and Jaydayalji Dalmia is the Secretary. His son Vishnu is also attached to it. So are Ramnath Goenka, Laxminivas Birla and many other Seths (businessmen). Jaydayal Dalmia has spent over fifty lakhs for the work of the Shri Krishna Janmasthan. His wife has given fourteen or fifteen lakhs for building the Guest House. They are actually the owners, since they have made it. However, when they come and stay there, they meticulously pay the room charges to the Trust. This is called ‘nyasa’.

Once, the accounts of the Shri Krishna Janmasthan Trust were placed before me. I saw that Jaydayal Dalmia pays the room charges of the Guest House whenever he stays there. It was a real eye-opener for me! I told the Premपुरi Ashram and the Satsahitya Prakashan Trust that I would not accept any money from them. I do not take anything from any other Trust either. You people may not know that the place I stay at is not within the grounds of the Anand Vrindavan Trust, or the Lokhit Pranyas. The J.K. Group has made some rooms outside the premises for me. They are the owners of these rooms. This property does not belong to any Trust. I have been staying there for the past thirty or thirty five years, since the days of Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj.

Do you know why I am telling you these things about Trusts? You see, in Hindi and in Sanskrit, Trust is called न्यास ‘nyaasa’, and Trustees are called न्यासी ‘nyaasi’. Samyak Trustee means सम्यक्-न्यासी-संन्यासी *samyak-nyaasi-sannyaasi*. The meaning of nyas is ‘dharohar’. ‘This is not mine. It belongs to another, but is kept with me. I have no right over it, and I have no attachment to it. It is not for my use. It is not for my satisfaction or pleasure. Neither does this belong to me, nor is it meant for me. It is someone else’s property. I am only taking care of it, nothing more. My task is only to ensure that it is not misused in any way; that it is used fully for the good of other people.

Actually, to whom does this earth belong? It belongs to the Ishwara, doesn’t it? Yes! The Ishwara makes it for all beings to use and enjoy. When a man becomes a भूपति ‘bhoopati’ (owner of some land) and says, ‘I am the owner of this land,’ he is a dishonorable man. This body is composed of the clay of which the earth is made. Just as the clay is for all, this body is also for the benefit of all. Yes! So are the water, fire, air, space, sun and moon. This is nobody’s family inheritance. The Ishwara has made all these for the pleasure and benefit of all beings. He does not send a bill to you.

If you are an honest person, you should make the payment for all the things of the Ishwara that you use. Just as you pay the rent of the house in which you live, pay the

rent for staying on the Ishwara's earth. Just as you pay for the water that comes into your tap, pay for the Ishwara's water that you drink. Just as you pay for the cooking gas, pay for the fire of the Ishwara. Just as you pay for using the radio and TV, pay the bill for the space made by the Ishwara. Pay for the light of the sun and the moon, the way you pay for the electricity you use. All this wealth belongs to the Ishwara. All that you can do is to take care of it. If you use it and enjoy it, then you should honorably use this body of yours that is made of clay, for giving comfort and convenience to others.

Let others be given food to eat, by this body of yours. Let them receive clothes to wear, water to drink, and electricity for lighting their homes. Let them get air. Let them hear pleasant sounds. Yes! Instead of using your body only for yourself, put it to good use by serving others. सर्वभूतहिते रताः *Sarvabhootahite`rataah* – get involved in doing good to all beings. Make full use of your life, and use it in the best possible way.

What does it mean to be a Sanyasi? Apply your mind and try to understand this. Look, even an अज्ञानी *agnaani* (one who lacks Gnan) can be a Sanyasi. Sanyas does not mean Gnan. Sanyas doesn't even mean a जीवनमुक्त *jeevanmukta* (a liberated soul). Gnan and जीवन मुक्ति *jeevan mukti* (liberation in this life) are two different things. Dualism is negated in Gnan; duality becomes मिथ्या *mithyaa* – a relative truth. Jeevan mukti is the life a person leads after obtaining Gnan. A life that is free of doubts and dualities, and is without fear is called 'jeevan mukti'. A Sanyasi can even be बद्ध *baddha* (bound). He may even be reborn. He may even go to Hell or Heaven. The doors of Hell are open for a Sanyasi who does wrong, and he can also go to Heaven if he does good deeds.

A Sanyasi can go to Vaikunth (the land of Vishnu Bhagwan) if he does bhakti of Bhagwan. He can go to Brahmaloaka if he worships the Lord without desiring anything in return. Yes! However, he can never be a Sanyasi if he considers any place, object or person to belong to him. A Sanyasi has a bright inner vision in which he sees that no place, object or person in the world is his.

At the time of taking Sanyas, the person makes a formal resolve, 'I have done Sanyas of the realms of Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka and Svarloka. These are not mine.' A pledge is made on the day of Sanyas, नाहं न मे 'Naaham na me'. Neither do I exist, nor is anything mine. अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो मत्तः अस्तु त्वाहम् *Abhayam sarvabhootebhyo mattah astu tvaaham*. Let all the beings in the world have nothing to fear from me.' For the Sanyasi, it is ordained that he should not even break off the twig he needs for cleaning his teeth. If any animal is eating up the grain in somebody's field, he should not drive it away. If a Sanyasi sees someone steal something, he should not catch the thief. As far as he is concerned, both the thief and the man are human beings; they are equal. The property belongs to another (the Ishwara). Each of us thinks that the things belong to us.

On the day we take Sanyas, we make a संकल्प *sankalpa* (formal resolve), 'This is the प्रायश्चित्त *prayashchitta* (repentance) for all the sins I have done till today. Ancestors!

Please forgive me! I now offer a श्राद्ध *shraaddha* (ablutions) for you. After today, I will never do the shraddha for my ancestors.

Devatas! क्षम्यताम् *Kshamyataam*! Forgive me! I do the हवन *havan* (fire worship) for you today. After today, I will not do Deva Puja every again. I have done the prayashchitta for all the sins I have done till today.' This is the sankalpa that is taken.

When a person takes Sanyas, he says a mantra offering up everything to the Brahman. 'I have now given up everything. I will live as Bhagwan keeps me. ज्यों-ही ज्यों ही रखियत हों, त्यों-ही त्यों ही रहियत हैं हे हरि ! *Jyon-hee jyon hee rakhiyata haun, tyon-hee tyon hee rahiyata haun, he`hari.*'

Look, you celebrate your birth and you celebrate your marriage. Now, tell me! Isn't the day you took the decision to take Sanyas, and made the resolve, a cause for celebration? It is! You may not accept it. We celebrate that we became a Sanyasi. Yes!

A day comes into our life, when we become a Sanyasi, lift up both arms, and walk off in a Northerly direction. This is not for becoming the head of any group or organization. The purpose is not to preside over any institution or Mutt. There is no desire for being the head of any Peeth. Peeth means a small stool. Just as this small table is placed before my, if a pair of खड़ाऊँ *khadau* (wooden slippers worn by Monks) were to be placed on it, it would be called a Peethadhishwara!

So, to be a Peethadhishwara is not the purpose of becoming a Sanyasi. Nor is there any desire to be the most important person in the region or the country. I had taken the sankalpa for Sanyas, and gone off with the intention of never returning to a worldly life. 'I will live under some tree, and drink the water of the Gangaji.'

Sanyas means to realize that everything belongs to the Ishwara, and to leave everything to Him. 'I can stay here, or there; stay now or later; stay with this person or that one; stay this way or that way. I can live or not live. These things no longer concern me. I have lifted up both hands and said, 'Nothing in this world belongs to me. I will live as the Ishwara keeps me.' जो थारी राय सो म्हारी राय। राजी हैं हम उसी में, जिसमें तेरी रजा है *Jo thaari raaya so mhaari raaya. Rajee hain usee mein jismein te`ri rajaa hai.*'

यहाँ यों भी वाह-वाह, वहाँ वो भी वाह-वाह !

Yahaan yon bhi vaaha-vaaha, vahaan vo bhi vaaha-vaaha.

One more point. Please understand. Grihastha-grihastha. Had there been a resolve in your mind, 'I will give up everything one day, and become a Sanyasi,' you would avoid doing anything unethical to accumulate so much. The greed for material gain is slackened when there is a resolve to ultimately give up all we have.

Look, you may or may not become a Sanyasi, but the sankalpa should be present in your mind that one day you will be giving up all you have. This resolve will reduce the strength of your avarice. A tendency to give up things will prevail. You think about what will happen after you die, but you don't think about your present life! You think that after your death your family and descendents will all be quite useless. You think

they will be fools, and that no good fortune will ever come to them. They will lack all ability to earn for themselves, and they will be without understanding. They won't even have a good प्रारब्ध *praarabdha* (fate created by past deeds). You feel that you are earning for all these useless, foolish youngsters who will be unfortunate. Instead of thinking about what will happen after your death, think a little about your present life.

Make an effort to grasp the meaning of the word 'Sanyas'. Sanyas means सम्यक् न्यास *samyak nyaasa*, which means to let go of, well and truly. This Sanyas has a great utility in our life. A person with a mental resolve to give up everything at the end will be saved from getting attached to worldly things, you know! This Sanyas is not something ordinary and commonplace. It is a truth of life. It is an essential part of our life.

विश्वात्मा *Vishvaatmaa* (the Atma of the whole world) is called Brahmacharya. Hiranyagarbha (the 'I' in every individual) is called Grihastha. The Ishwara (supremely independent power) is called Vanaprastha. The Turiya Tattva (supreme essence) is called Sanyas. Brahmacharya is Vishva-Virat (the entire Creation). The Grihastha is the Hiranyagarbha. The Vanaprastha is the Ishwara, and the Sanyas is the Turiya.

The Shudra (labor class) is Brahmacharya. The Vaishya (trader class) is Grihastha. The Kshatriya (warriors and rulers) is the Ishwara, and the Brahmin (priest) is the Turiya Tattva. These are things that can be understood when the mind is unbiased.

Look, is your brain all right? Your hand is all right, your stomach is all right, and your feet are all right. These are called Brahmin-Sanyas-Turiya. Kshatriya-Vanaprastha-Ishwara. Vaishya-Grihastha-Hiranyagarbha. Shudra-Brahmacharya-Vishva-Virat. What else? The feet do the work of carrying the weight of the body. The stomach stores the food and distributes the nourishment to the whole body. The hands do the work of protecting the body. If a mosquito comes and sits on your nose, your hand will immediately brush it off. The head does all the intellectual work for the body. If your brain is spoilt, you can take it that the Brahmin-Sanyasi are spoilt. If your intellect does not function well, take it that the people who earn their livelihood by their intellectual abilities, and are त्यागी *tyaagi* (leading lives of austerity) are not fit.

Not only in India, but in the entire human race, if the Brahmin-Sanyasi is not kept safe, if the intellectuals and those who believe in simple living are not kept safe, then you can take it that humanity will not be safe either.

You take the name of Sanyas and make a joke of it. That is to ridicule the whole world. You are laughing at humanity. By laughing at Sanyas, you are laughing at the essence of Truth. Sanyas is an essential and inevitable part of your life. You should have a feeling of respect for Sanyas.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Mera Kuch Bhi Nahin, athava, Sab Kuch Ishwara Ka Hai.

Nothing Belongs to Me, or else, Everything Belongs To The Ishwara.

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Sanyas is of two kinds. One is to think, ‘What is not mine?’ Now, if you begin to think about all the things that don’t belong to you, you will eliminate everything one by one. You will come to the conclusion that nothing is yours. This is called the method of विवेक *viveka* – discrimination. What we call ‘mine’ is fleeting. It is destructible. It is inanimate, and it is a form of sorrow.

What we call ‘mine’ leaves us. It does not even know us. Nor does it love us. The things we feel possessive about are so full of faults and defects that we should continuously let go of them, and return to our Self. The Shastras call this vivek. This world is destructible. Even if I try to stop it, it cannot be held back. It rushes on. It is transient. I love this world, but it does not understand anything; it is inanimate, it lacks consciousness. It is sorrow. It makes me suffer when it ensnares me, and it makes me suffer when it leaves me.

We have no control over this world. If anyone would have been able to control it, would anyone ever be diseased? Had we been able to control things, would anyone suffer? Sitaram! This interactive world is transient, inanimate, and full of sorrow. I, myself, am the eternal, non-dual essence of the Paramatma. I am pure existence, consciousness and bliss. I am Sacchidananda. I am separate from the world. This world has nothing that belongs to me. This is, त्यागः संन्यासोच्यते ‘*Tyaagah sannyaasochyate*’.’ This is the Sanyas of discrimination. The त्वंपदार्थ *tvam-padaartha* (the ‘You’ factor in the supreme statement of the Vedas – ‘You Are That’ – stating that the Atma and the Brahman are one). This is one method of Sanyas.

Another method of Sanyas is that you examine what is the Ishwara’s, in this world. Does space belong to you? No, it belongs to the Ishwara. Did you create the sun and the moon? No, the Ishwara did. Did you make all these stars, planets and constellations? Very well, if you didn’t make them, did your ancestors make them? No, nobody made them. Only the Ishwara has created them. Was it you, who created the wind? No! The Ishwara mobilized the wind. Did you create the air we breathe? No, it was created by the Ishwara. Did you create fire? No, the fire, too, was created by the Ishwara.

All this is the creation of the Ishwara! It was He who made the fire on which your daily food is cooked. Was the ocean created by you? No, it was created by the Ishwara. Did you make the water we drink? No, the Ishwara did. Well – tell me now, was the earth created by you? No, this earth is also created by the Ishwara. This earth, water, fire, air, space, sun, moon, planets, constellations, and stars – the entire Cosmos – belongs to the

Ishwara. The Ishwara is the owner of everything. He is the Master. He is the Creator; no one else. Yes! This is one method of Sanyas.

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य पत्परः। अनन्येनैव योगेन।

Ye`tu sarvaani karmaani mayi sannyasya matparah. Annanye`naiva yoge`na.

(Thus, give up all your actions to Me, and be yoked to Me continuously.)

All this belongs to the Ishwara. This is the bhakti Sanyas that is dominated by the तत्-पदार्थ *tat-padārtha* (the ‘That’ factor in the Mahavakya of the Vedas, ‘You Are That’). From the viewpoint of the tat-padartha, it is called bhakti.

‘Everything that exists belongs to the Ishwara. Nothing belongs to me.’ श्रद्धा *Shraddhaa* (faith) is needed, to cultivate this conviction. We do not see the Ishwara. He is hidden somewhere. He is invisible, and this is why we need shraddha. When shraddha dominates, our thinking becomes bhakti. The word ‘bhakti’ is made from the word भाग ‘*bhaaga*’, meaning ‘portion’. भाग ‘*Bhaag*’ means, ‘This portion is Bhagwan’s; it is not mine.’ भागो भक्तिः। भजनं भक्तिः। भजनं भक्तिः *Bhaago bhaktih, bhajanam bhaktih*. Shatter your conviction of being the owner. Develop the awareness that everything belongs to the Ishwara.

Look, when the Ishwara becomes the owner of everything, nothing remains yours. Very well; tell me – did you come into your father’s seed of your own volition? Did you knowingly enter your mother’s womb? Did you arrange for the milk to come into your mother’s breast for you to drink? You didn’t. Well, did you start the beating of your heart? Did you begin to make your lungs take in, and push air out? No, you didn’t. Then, whose miracle is this? My brother, the one who put you into your father’s seed and into your mother’s womb, sent milk into your mother’s breast for you, started the working of your heart and lungs, the one who gave you a heart with which to love and a brain with which to think – who is He?

Sitaram! Just take a look at Him! He is a great craftsman. He is a great artist. All that you see in the world is the work of this Master Craftsman, the Ishwara. It is all His portion.

When such a bhakti comes into the heart, then it will be the Sanyas of bhakti. Look, to give up everything with the thought, ‘Nothing belongs to me,’ is the Sanyas of the Tvam-padartha – the ‘you’ factor. To give up everything with the thought, ‘Everything belongs to the Ishwara,’ is the Sanyas of the Tat-padartha – the ‘that’ factor. When bhakti rises in the heart, it is the Sanyas in the form of bhakti or love. Thus, Sanyas is of two kinds: Sanyas dominated by the Tvam-padartha which is based on discrimination, and the Sanyas dominated by the Tat-padartha which is based on bhakti.

Some of our sophisticated intellectuals can, if they apply their minds, understand the principle of ‘this is not mine.’ However, it is only when they apply their mind. Otherwise, they blindly go on believing, ‘this is mine, this is also mine, and this is mine, too.’

Just see how surprising this is! The gold, silver, diamonds and pearls have never once told you, 'You are my owner.' Yet you considered them to be yours and wept for them. You cry for the things that don't even recognize you. If you use discrimination, you will know that all this is fleeting; it is destructible. It will leave you one day.

You will know that all these things are inanimate; they are gross matter and forms of sorrow. 'These things will cause me sorrow.' If you think deeply, you will understand, 'Nothing is mine,' and you will be established in your Atma. This Sanyas, dominated by vivek, is the Tvam-padartha kind. It is a Sanyas that establishes you in your own Atma. However, it is not enough.

I told one Mahatma, 'I want हम शरणागति *sharanaagati* (to take refuge in the Ishwara). I want to do आत्मसमर्पण *aatmasamarpana* (offer myself up to the Ishwara). I want to throw myself at the feet of Bhagwan. I want to accept the shelter of the feet of the Ishwara.'

'All right,' he said. 'You want to belong to Bhagwan. You want to take the refuge of the lotus-feet of Bhagwan. That is excellent. Come to me tomorrow, after thinking deeply, as to what there is in this world that does not belong to Bhagwan. All right? Yes! Then I will immediately offer that up to Bhagwan.'

I went home and began to think. 'What connection do I have with my relatives and associates? What connection do I have with money and wealth? What is there in my body that belongs to me? What are these elements – the earth, water, fire, air, and space? What are the पंच तन्मात्रा *pancha tanmaatras* (the five subtle forms of matter)? What is this body and what are the senses? What is the antahkaran (the fourfold mind)? What is this अहं तत्त्व *aham-tattva* (the essence of the ego), the महद्-तत्त्व *mahad-tattva* (the universal consciousness), प्रकृति-तत्त्व *prakriti-tattva* (the essence of Nature), माया-तत्त्व *maayaa-tattva* (the Lord's power that causes delusion)? What is money and what is wealth? What are these relatives and companions? What is all this?'

All day long I pondered on these things, trying to find something that did not belong to Bhagwan. I thought for twenty four hours, but could think of nothing that did not belong to Him. Oh, everything here belongs to Bhagwan, you know. It is a fallacy to think that it is ours.

The following day I went to Mahatmaji and said, 'Maharaj, I could not think of a single object that does not belong to Bhagwan.'

'Vatsa (son)', said Mahatmaji, 'then everything already is Bhagwan's, isn't it? What will you offer up to Him?'

त्वदीयं वस्तु गोविन्द तुभ्यमेव समर्पये।

Tvadeeya vastu govinda tubhyame`va samarpaye`.

(I offer up to You, Govind, what is already Yours.)

Since nothing belongs to you, and everything belongs to the Bhagwan, तेरा तुझको सौंपते क्या लागत है मोर? 'Te`raa tujhako saunpate` kyaa lagata hai more'. (It costs me nothing to give You back what already belongs to You.)

Now, see; it is a fact that this world does not belong to me; it belongs only to the Ishwara. On one side, the Ishwara shows me the world, and on the other side, I am seeing the world. Now, if by some chance, I can no longer see the world, what is there to separate the Ishwara from me? Sitaram! There is nothing that separates me from the Ishwara. The existence of this interactive world that we call संसार '*sansaara*', is a curtain that separates us from the Ishwara. On one side is the Ishwara, and I am on the other side. This interactive world is in-between.

All right, let us put aside this world for a while, the way businessmen put aside a sum that they cannot account for. When businessmen are unable to match the figures, they write off the amount as a loss. Now, from where did this sansara come, between the Ishwara and me? This cannot be accounted for. Put it aside as a miscellaneous expenditure. Let it be negated for a while. The Vedantis use the word बाध '*baadha*', which means, to negate. The world is absolutely worth negating. Just pretend that it does not exist.

That, which I call 'me' and 'mine', doesn't exist. The sansara I call the Ishwara's does not exist either. Isn't it? Just believe that it is so. I tell you, there is no such thing as the sansara. Then, what is it that separates the Ishwara from me? As long as nothing exists except the Ishwara, nothing will exist except me. And, nothing will be there to separate the Ishwara from me.

The fact is that there is just one, non-dual, eternal essence that is the Brahman. The Atma is the Paramatma. Nothing exists except the Paramatma. Everything is in the Paramatma and the Paramatma is in everything. This is Gnan. Know it, and be happy within yourself.

Narayana! You are the music that can fill the ears of all Creation with its notes. You are the soothing touch that can give comfort to the skin of all Creation. You are the loveliness that appeals to everybody. You are the sweetness that everybody is engrossed in. Well, you have the sweetness, the beauty, and the fragrance that attracts everyone to you.

Everything that is in the Ishwara is in you. If you consider this world to belong to the Ishwara, see His artistry wherever you go. What skill He possesses! What a Master craftsman He is! How much beauty and sweetness He has created! Oh, there is only a deep pleasure; there is only an excellent flavor!

Very well, if you do not consider the world to be 'mine', then you are fully liberated. Let this be divided, my brother. If this world is not 'mine', there is only liberation.

If the world belongs to the Ishwara, there is only happiness. Everything that belongs to our Beloved is dear. Yes! Even the shoes of our Beloved are dear. Even the hurt He inflicts on us is dear.

I had heard this story earlier; you can also listen to it. Shri Radha and Shri Krishna were dancing one day, when Shri Krishna's nail accidentally scratched Shri Radha's hand.

Shri Radharani is extremely delicate. She is so tender that, लगी है कली गुलाब की, परिहें गात खरोच 'Lagee hai kalee gulaba kee parhain gala kharocha.' Shri Radharani's cheek was scratched by the touch of a rose petal! Now, here Shri Krishna's nail scratched her. Shri Krishna caught her hand and saw the scratch. 'Radhe, my nail scratched you hand! Look, my Beloved, don't worry. It will be healed in a day or two.'

'No! No! My Beloved!' said Radharani. 'I am not hurt at all. Don't even think about it.' Now, my friends, a few months passed by. One day, Shri Krishna again caught Shri Radharani's hand lovingly, and began to dance. He noticed that the scratch on her hand was still fresh. She Krishna was surprised. 'Radhe,' He said, 'it is two or four months since my nail scratched you. How is it that the scratch is not yet healed?'

Shri Radharani smiled, and said, 'My Beloved, the scratch does heal, but I peel off the new skin that grows over it.'

'My beloved, why do you do that?' asked Shri Krishna. Shri Radharani looked lovingly at Him, and said, 'Because it is filled with sweet memories of you! The memory of everything that is connected to you gives me so much happiness that I want to keep it ever green, my Beloved.'

You see, even our Beloved's nail that scratches us, or His teeth that bite us, even an insult or rejection from Him seem very dear. Do you know why? It is because they contain the sweetest of sweet memories of our Beloved. The wound inflicted by the Beloved brings His memories. So, the wound is not a source of pain; it becomes a happy memory.

All right, my brother, one form of Sanyas is that everything in the world belongs only to the Ishwara. This space, brightness, water, and earth – everything belongs to Him. These trees and shrubs, the insects and worms, the animals and birds, and all the people belong to the Ishwara. The Ishwara pulsates in them all. Satya (existence) is in them all. Everything has consciousness. Everything contains bliss. Everything is rasa (deep enjoyment). Everything is sweet.

इयं पृथ्वी सर्वेषां भूतानां मधु। रसौ वै सः। रसमेवालब्ध्वानन्दी भवति।

Iyam prithvee sarve'shaam bhootaanaam madhu. Rasau vai sah.

Rasame`vaalabdhvaanandee bhavati.

We read in the Upanishad that everything is filled with pleasure, sweetness, and dance. That is it! That is Sanyas. Sanyas means, everything has become the property of the Ishwara. How marvelous!

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्य।

Mayi sarvaani karmaani sanyasya.

Everything actually belongs to the Ishwara.

All right, another form of Sanyas is, 'Nothing belongs to me.' When nothing remains yours, the Ishwara doesn't allow you to remain separate. Who is responsible for the person who has nothing? Well, tell me! The Master is responsible for the food, water, clothes, bedding, sleeping, sitting, the comfort and the sorrow of the man who has

nothing. The Ishwara is such a responsible Master that He has no peer. The Ishwara is such a wonderful Master that nobody can match Him. The Ishwara is an unparalleled Badshah. The only drawback is our lack of faith in Him.

If a person has full confidence in the Ishwara, he will have nothing but good fortune. The Ishwara is an incomparable, unparalleled Monarch. He is a wonderful, unique Master, but how firm is your faith? Weigh yourself. The person whose faith in the Ishwara is unshakeable and unbreakable will always get good fortune and salvation.

If you see with bhakti and love, everything belongs to the Ishwara. This is called Sanyas in the form of bhakti, or pre`ma (love). If you see with discrimination, then you will see that nothing belongs to you or any other. That is called the Sanyas of discrimination.

If you know your 'I', it becomes the Sanyas of discrimination, dominated by the Tvam-padartha. If you know Him, it becomes the Sanyas of bhakti, dominated by the Tat-padartha. Know either your 'I', or know Him – Sanyas is achieved by both methods.

All right, ॐ नमो नारायणाय ! *Om namo naaraayanaaya!*

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Ab Hum Shartiya Bolte Hain

I tell you this with certainty.

Narayana! Narayana!Narayana! Narayana!

The Sanyas Ashram is not for everybody. The Brahmacharya Ashram (the stage of a celibate student), however, is for everybody. Those who are eligible for the Yagyopaveeta (the sacred thread) should be formally initiated into the Brahmacharya Ashram. Everybody is also eligible for the Grihastha Ashram (the married householder). The subject of Sanyas has nothing to do with votes, or popularity. It is not for saying, ‘Come, and join our Sect. Be one of us. We will dye your clothes. Let us enlarge our numbers.’ Isn’t it so?

We see that all the other religious groups in the world want to increase their following. This Sanyas Ashram, however, is not a मज्जहब *majhab* (religious Sect); it contains an element of eligibility.

Narayana! If there is just one true Sanyasi in the world, and he does not have even a single vote, there is nobody who can shake his absolute faith. Even if Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh were to come and say, ‘Mahatmaji, you are not the Brahman,’ he will give a clear-cut answer. ‘All of you are men in a dream. You are illusions. Your words are meaningless. My essence fills everything. It is the सच्चिदानन्द ब्रह्म *sacchidaanada brahm* (the Brahman is sat=existence, chid=consciousness, ananda=bliss).

Narayana! These people – who focus on worldly trifles – can they ever obtain the पूर्णता *poornataa* (wholeness, that is the Brahman)? There is no निष्ठा *nishthaa* (firm faith) in their heart. The श्रवण *shravana* (listening to discourses) is not as ordained. The मनन *manan* (giving deep thought to the subject) is incomplete. They are surrounded by negative influences. Tell me, now, can such people touch even the shadow of Sanyas?

What does Sanyas mean? त्यागः संन्यासलक्षणः ‘*Tyaagah sannyaasa lakshanaah.*’ Uddhavji asked Shri Krishna, ‘What is त्याग *tyaaga* (giving up) – उक्तस्त्यागः *uktastyagaah*?’ He replied, ‘Sanyas is tyaga. The characteristic of tyaga is Sanyas.’

These days, people say whatever they like about Sanyas, because they have no faith in our Vedic Dharma and tradition, or in the system of the Varnashram Dharma (the Dharma for the four Varnas, or social status; and the Ashrams, or stages in life). Is it not so? Yes! You would not have heard the viewpoint of Dharma – दण्डग्रहणमात्रेण नरः नारायणो भवेत् ‘*Dandagrahanamaatre`na narah naaraayano bhavet`.*’ A man becomes Narayana by just accepting the danda (Monk’s staff). This does not mean that everybody should accept the danda! The meaning of Sanyas is tyaga, renunciation. What, actually, is tyaga? It is to give up sorrow, everything inanimate, अज्ञान *agnaana* (lack of Gnan, ignorance), birth, and death.

Look, our essence is ananda! The sorrow that seems to be present is our own acceptance of sorrow. You can never be sad unless and until you accept sorrow. You have this freedom to make the choice. Many people will know this, and many will not. Sorrow cannot touch you as long as you refuse to accept the subtle ego, 'I am unhappy.' Sorrow is not an illusion that glimmers. Nor is it a solid object like a pot or a painting. Sorrow is something that is observed. It is a perception. When the witness identifies with the shadow of sorrow, he gets the feeling that he is sad.

'I am sad,' is a fallacy. It is the ego attached to a mirage. To identify with a mirage is a fallacy; it is lack of discrimination. It is अविद्या *avidyaa* (nescience). You can never see sorrow, the way you see this handkerchief; nor can you lift it with your hand. The निमित्त *nimitta* (instrumental factor) in दुःख *dukha* (sorrow) is a superimposition – इदं दुःखं *idam dukham* (this is sorrow). The illusion, 'I am unhappy', is felt as something real, when the witness identifies with the sorrow. This means that you are absolutely independent in believing – or refusing to believe – that you are unhappy.

Only Vedanta can give you the Gnan that you are at liberty to choose to be unhappy, or reject it. Don't ever accept the feeling, 'I am unhappy.' The acceptance of being dukhi is a fallacy that is caused by agnan. It is a lack of discrimination, and it is attached to your ego. The refusal to accept it, and to give it up, is called Sanyas.

'I am a कर्ता *kartaa* (doer) who is connected to the कर्मेन्द्रिय *karma`ndriya* (organs of action). I am the पापी *paapi* (sinner) and the पुण्यात्मा *punyaatmaa* (pious person). I am connected to the ज्ञानेन्द्रिय *gnaane`ndriya* (sense organs). I am the ज्ञाता *gyaataa* (knower) of sense objects like a pot or a picture. I get knowledge of things like sound or touch, through my senses.' Narayana! This feeling of being the doer and the knower is also not आभास-भास्य *aabhaasa-bhaasya* – it is not a mirage. It is known by witnessing. Can कर्तापना *kartaapanaa* (being the doer) be seen by anyone? Can anyone see the ज्ञातापना *gyaataapanaa* (being the knower)? He just believes it to be so.

The meaning of Sanyas is that you do not believe yourself to be happy or unhappy; you do not consider yourself to be the karta or the gyata. You are the essence of Gnan. Why do you superimpose the mind on your essence, and consider yourself to be the भोक्ता *bhoktaa* (the one who has the experience)? Why do you identify with the organs of action, and consider yourself to be the karta? Why do you identify with the sense organs and consider yourself to be the gyata? Don't consider yourself to be the bhokta-karta-gyata!

Now, what is the third point? You are सन्मात्र *sanmaatra* (existence). You are सत्स्वरूप *satsvaroopa* (existence is your essence). The fact is, neither are you born, nor do you die. Tell me, now, do you see your own birth or death? Has there ever been anyone who has had the experience of seeing themselves being born or dying? My brother, the one who is watching, is the witness of the birth and death; he is not the one who is taking birth or dying. The one who is being born, or is dying, is another. This other is seen, as

one in a dream. You are sanmatra. Anything that is separate from you is like something seen in a dream.

Narayana! If you say, 'I have just listened to a discourse very attentively, and I declare that I am not the dukhi-sukhi (unhappy or happy); I am not a karta or gyata; I am not the one who gets born and dies;' then take it for a fact that this battle of yours will continue all your life. You will never be victorious.

Yes, indeed, people who say that it is enough to negate, or refuse to accept, are quite mistaken. Those who say that agnan is removed as soon as it is recognized, do not know what agnan is! Is that not a fact? Actually, our essence is separate from the bhoktaapana-kartaapana-gyaataapana, and birth and death. Agnan is dispelled when the person realizes that he is the unattached essence, the Atma, the non-dual Brahman. Agnan is dispelled by the knowledge of the substratum – the Brahman – on which everything is superimposed. Knowledge if agnan is not enough to destroy agnan.

If someone says, 'I will speak only agnan,' wish him best of luck! However, you must understand that by obtaining the Gnan of the agnan that is attached to its आश्रय *aashraya* (support or refuge) and विषय *vishay* (object), the agnan is removed.

Who has agnan? And, what is the agnan about? When you know the agnan along with the ashray-vishay, then agnan will be removed. The one who has the experience, 'I am ignorant', is the substratum of pure consciousness. The agnan is regarding his being the Brahman. This ignorance will be removed when he obtains the Gnan of being the Brahman.

You see, the support of this experience, अज्ञोऽहम् '*Agyoham* – I am ignorant', is the Atma; and the object of ignorance is the Brahman. When you get the Gnan that the Atma and the Brahman are one, then agnan is dispelled. The meaning of Sanyas is ब्रह्मात्मैक्यबोध *brahmaatmaikyabodha* (the knowledge that the Atma and the Brahman are one).

You see, there is a मुख्य-संन्यास *mukhya-sannyaasa* (primary Sanyas) and a गौण-संन्यास *gauna-sannyaasa* (secondary Sanyas). One is the true Sanyas, and the other is Sanyas in interaction. The real Sanyas is, 'I have neither sorrow, nor happiness. I do not have कर्म-ज्ञान *karma-gnaana* (knowledge about karma); nor do I have वृत्ति-ज्ञान *vritti-gnaana* (knowledge about the fluctuating mental inclination). I have no birth and no death. Everything pulsates in my own eternal Self. I have the knowledge that my Atma is non-dual.'

True Sanyas is to give up duality, knowing that the unattached Atma is the non-dual Brahman. When a Sanyasi knows himself to be the indivisible Brahman, and experiences his non-duality – oneness with all beings – then that is true Sanyas.

Look, I am telling you one thing more about अद्वैत-बोध *advaita bodh* (knowledge about non-duality). Look at the meaning of the word 'advaita' (non-dual). That which is divided into two parts, is called द्वैत '*dvaita*'. द्विधाइतं द्वितमेव द्वैतं। नास्ति द्वैतं यस्मिन् तत् अद्वैतं '*Dvidhaaitam dvitame`va dvaitam. Naasti dvaitam yasmin tat advaitam*' Very well; if

someone says, 'It is not a solid object,' then he will come to particles. The Shruti (Vedic verse) says, अनणु 'ananu'; not अणु 'anu' (miniscule) is ananu. The Shruti negates the gross as well as the microscopic. If it is not a particle, it must be gross, or solid. If it is not solid, it must be a particle, an atom, or molecule, etc. However, the Shruti negates the 'I' completely. It says that our eternal, unbroken essence is neither an atom, nor gross matter. It contains neither anu, nor anything स्थूल *sthoola* (gross or solid), nor any duality. Hence, true Sanyas is to know that our unattached essence is the non-dual Brahman, and to give up all duality.

This is the mukhya Sanyas. Now, what is the guana Sanyas? The secondary Sanyas is the ब्रह्मवत् प्रकृति *brahmavat prakriti* (having a nature like the Brahman). Just as the Brahman is non-dual, the Sanyasi should also be alone, isn't it? Just as the Brahman has no covering – no guile or deceit – the Sanyasi should also have nothing to hide. Just as the Brahman is immovable, and unshakeable, the Sanyasi should also be firm in his principles. Just as the Sanyasi is कूटस्थ *kootastha* (unaffected), the Sanyasi should also remain unmoved by the things that happen. Just as the Brahman remains a detached witness, so should the Sanyasi. Thus, by merely knowing what the nature of the Brahman is, Sanyas Dharma will be born.

The basic viewpoint of the Sanyas Dharma is to have the Gnan of the nature of the Brahman. Look; you can recognize a Sanyasi. You can know what kind of clothing a Sanyasi wears, and the kind of lifestyle he has. But, do you know what the basic substance of the Sanyas Dharma is? Do you know the matter of which Sanyas Dharma is made? Come, I will tell you. The basic stuff, of which Sanyas Dharma is made, is the Gnan of the Brahmavat Prakriti.

Now I will tell you about a kind of Sanyas that I have heard from the Mahapurush (great souls). You can also accept this Sanyas, can't you? You can accept it while wearing white or black clothes. Sanyas means अन्तर्दृष्टि *antardrishti* – inner vision. Now, see; the same things come into your mind. What can you really give up? Can you give up yourself? No, you cannot give up yourself. Very well, can you give up another? My brother, others are already given up! Is it not so? People wander from shop to shop for gold and silver. They walk from street to street for their friend or lover, don't they? What is there to give up, among these people? They are already separate from us. We can't let go of something we had never caught hold of.

Actually, Sanyas means to give up the false understanding of clinging to the things that were always separate from us. Giving up false understanding is true Sanyas. However, if someone wants to be a Sanyasi, then – there is antardrishti! Sanyas means a bright inner vision.

A Sanyasi should have no attachment for any place in the world – not for any Mutt or Mandir! Is that not correct? Yes, indeed! He should not be attached to any individual, family, or group. Nor should he have any attachment for any object – not even his देह

danda (Monk's staff) or कमण्डलु *kamandalu* (vessel), or कौपी *kaupeena* (loin cloth). अकिञ्चन भवं स्वास्थ्यं कौपीनत्वेऽपि दुर्लभम्। कौपीनत्वे-कौपीनवत्त्वेऽपि दुर्लभम्।

‘*Akinchana bhavam svaasthyam kaupeennatve`pi durlabham.*’ ‘*Kaupeenatve`-kaupeenatve`pi durlabham.*’ You see, the inner vision is not related to any place, such as a Mutt, Mandir, State or country. Nor has it any connection with any individual, whoever it may be. It is not attached to any item, either. Where the fire of inner vision burns brightly, it is unrelated to any place, person, or thing. It is also beyond the influence of time. If you have obtained such an inner vision, you have obtained true Sanyas. True Sanyas means a Brahman that walks and wanders in the world.

The Ishwara who interacts in the world is called a Sanyasi. नरः नारायणो भवेत् ‘*Narah naaraayano bhavet`.*’ The पारमार्थिक स्वरूप *paaramaarthik svaroop* (the supreme essence) of the Sanyasi is called the Brahman. If you do not understand this, then you do not understand the meaning of Sanyas. Then, there is also the fact that Sanyas is not for increasing followers. It is not for proselytizing. People need to be eligible for Sanyas, don't they? The more desires a person destroys, the more eligible he becomes for Sanyas. Being free of desires and negative feelings is a vital factor. Yoga has the capacity to dispel restlessness or negative inclinations in a moment. Fix your eyes on one spot, and see; you will no longer feel unsettled. Is it not so? Yes, indeed! When the आवरण-भंग *aavarana-bhanga* (the breaking of the screen of nescience) happens, the person's विपर्यय *viparyaya* (mental vicissitudes) are removed. The avarana bhang is definite.

Another point is that some people have doubts about how negative tendencies are removed. Look, regarding this, I am telling you not to worry about your mind becoming permanently pure. When you clear your bowels your stomach is emptied. You feel light and sit for worship. Is it not so? In the same way, just remove the dirty matter from your mind for a little while. Discard it for just six minutes. Remove it for six hours, six days, and six months. The Vedas and Vedanta make no condition that Tattvagnan (knowledge about the essence of the Brahman) can be obtained only when the mind is purified permanently. I say this publicly. I challenge any learned person to tell me how many days the mind should be pure, before a person can obtain Tattvagnan.

Oh, my brother, I say this to you publicly. I challenge any learned person to tell me for how many days his mind must be pure, before a person can obtain Tattvagnan.

Look, my brother, you have all come, and are sitting here, instead of going to a cinema. Tell me, is this not called विवेक *vive`k* (discrimination)? You are not sitting in your shop making money; you have come here. Is this not वैराग्य *vairaagya* (renunciation)? Tell me, do you feel शम *shama* (tranquility), or not? Haven't you restrained your sense organs? Doesn't your life contain the virtue of तितिक्षा *titkshaa* (enduring discomfort peacefully)? Aren't you sitting here with your mind turned away from worldly tasks? Aren't you concentrating on my discourse, and listening with faith? You are. Isn't there a wish in

your heart, to be free of sorrow? You sit here with vivek, vairagya, shama-dama (mental and physical restraint) and the other lofty mental states called the षट्सम्पत्ति 'shat sampatti'. You also have मुमुक्षा *mumukshaa* (desire for liberation). If there is a wish in your heart to obtain the ultimate knowledge, it is possible for you to obtain Tattvagnan. You can become free of sorrow forever. You can rise above sorrow right now, sitting where you are.

My brother, I say this publicly where crowds of fifty thousand have gathered. Look, say along with me, श्रीराम जय राम जय जय राम 'Shri Rama jai Rama, jai jai Rama.' If you feel embarrassed to say it, don't say it, all right? But, I have already said it to you. Understand this. I said it to you, but you did not say it. To tell you the truth, there is no need for you to say it. By the Grace of God, your ears are open. So, you would have heard श्रीराम जय राम जय जय राम 'Shri Rama jai Rama jai jai Rama'. In case someone is deaf, he would surely have seen my lips moving as I said श्रीराम जय राम जय जय राम 'Shri Rama jai Rama jai jai Rama.' Now, I tell you with certainty, that all your sins up to today have been destroyed. I say this on the strength of the Vedas, the Shrutis, and the Puranas. I say this in the name of the Ishwara. All the sins you have been guilty of up to today, are destroyed. You are freed of all your sins.

Very well; even if you say that you do not accept this, I still state that you are liberated from all your past sins. There you are! You are liberated even if you do not accept it! Yes, it is true! However, there is a condition – don't bring the sins back to life. Isn't it? When will the sins be revived? Your sins will be revived when you sin again. All your sins up to today have been burnt to ashes by simply saying the name of Rama once. When you sin again, they will all be brought back to life.

All right, look; the power of the राम-नाम *raama-naama* (the name of Rama) is equal to the power in the 'Tattvamasi' in Vedanta. (Tattvamasi is a Mahavakya. It is the great statement that proclaims, 'You are That', explaining that the Atma and the Brahman are one.) You may be wandering in the cycle of avidya since time immemorial. You may consider yourself to be subject to birth and death. You may think yourself to be the body and feel unhappy. The Mahavakya has the power to liberate you from the bonds of avidya by your hearing it just once.

If a man is sound asleep, and you call out, 'Mohan, get up,' he will awaken. Similarly, a single utterance of the Mahavakya has the capacity to destroy the avidya you have had, since time immemorial. You can be free of avidya instantly. Yes! The fact is, had you really been bound, my words just now would not have severed the bonds. You were never actually tied. मानि मानि बन्धन में आयो 'Maani maani bandhan mein aayo.' You believed yourself to be bound because of your agnan. Uttering the Mahavakya just once is enough to cut all your mental bonds.

Just now you possess all the साधन *saadhan* (methods) and qualities needed to purify your antahkaran, but a lack of श्रद्धा *shraddhaa* (faith) prevents you from obtaining direct

Gnan; and a lack of profound thought prevents you from obtaining the Gnan of that which is unseen. परोक्षज्ञानमश्रद्धा प्रतिबध्नाति नेतरत् 'Parokshagnaanamashraddhaa pratibadhnaati ne'tarat.' If you listen to discourses regularly, the obstruction of अश्रद्धा *ashraddhaa* (lack of faith) will be removed. It is necessary to do मनन *manan* (give deep thought) if you want to remove the obstruction caused by doubts. It is necessary to do निदिध्यासन *nididhyasana* (bring the mind back repeatedly to the subject of meditation) if you wish to remove the obstacles caused by विपर्यय *viparyaya* (mental vicissitudes).

Narayana! Look, if you want to do साधन *saadhan* (effort for spiritual progress), see the faults in yourself. Do sadhan for their removal. If you wish to be firm in your निष्ठा *nishthaa* (unwavering belief), then, don't look at the faults in you. Experience तृप्ति *tripti* (contentment). धन्योऽहम् 'Dhanyoham – I am fulfilled – dhanyoham. Yes. Let the अज्ञानी *agnaani* (those who lack Gnan) do श्रवण *shravana* (listen to discourses). Let those who have doubts do manan. Let people who are troubled by mental vicissitudes do nididhyasana. I have neither agnan, nor doubts, nor mental vicissitudes.'

शृण्वन्त्वदज्ञानत्वात्ते जानन् कस्मात् शृणोम्यऽहम्।

मन्यन्तां संशयापन्नाः किं मन्येऽहमसंशयः॥

विपर्यस्तो निदिध्यासेत् किं ध्यानं विपर्ययात्।

देहात्मवत् विपर्यासं न कदाचित् भजाऽम्यऽहं॥

Shrinvantvadagnaanattvaatte`jaanan kasmaat shrinomyaham,

Manyantaam sanshayaapannaah kim manye`hamasanshayah.

Viparyasto nididhyaase`t kim dhyaanam aviparyayaat,

De`haatmavat viparyaasam na kadaachit bhajaamyaham.

When the person has given up feeling connected to his body, speech, and antahkaran, considering them to be relative truths; if the कर्मी *karmi* (one who does karma) uses them to do karma, how does it harm the ज्ञानी *gnaani* (one who has Gnan) in any way? And, if the karmi – who does not know what a साक्षी *saakshee* (an observer, the Atma) is – and the Gnani calls the sakshi the Brahman, how does it harm the karmi? The interaction of the Gnani is to call the sakshi the Brahman; the interaction of the agnani is to have वृत्ति *vritti* (mental inclinations) connected to the body, speech and mind. The agnani should remain steady in his interaction, and the Gnani should remain steady in his interaction. Where is the scope for any difference of opinion between them?

देहबागबुद्ध्यस्त्यक्ता ज्ञानिनामृतबुद्धितः।

कर्मी प्रवर्तयेत्वाभिः ज्ञानिनोहियतेऽत्र किम्॥

यं कर्मी न विजानाति साक्षिणं तस्य तत्त्ववित्।

आत्मत्वं अद्वितां तेन ज्ञानिनो हियतेऽत्र किम्॥

एवं च कलहं कुत्र सम्भवेत् कर्मिणो मम।

विभिन्नविषयत्वेन हि पूर्वापरसमुद्रवत्॥

*De`havaagbuddhayastyaktaa gnaaninaamritabuddhitah,
Karmee pravartaye`tvaabhih gnaaninohiyate`trakim.
Yum karmee na vijaanaati saakshinam tasya tattvavitt,
Aatmatvam buddhitaam te`na gnaanino hiyate`tra kim.
E`vam cha kalaham kutra sambhave`t karmino mama,
Vibhinnavishayatve`na hi poorvaaparagamudravat.*

My brother, I have no dispute with karmis. You are free to undertake rituals like Yagyas, or stand for elections. Why should I argue about it? You can serve society or enjoy solitude – how does it matter to me? विष्णुं ध्यायेत् तु धीर्यद् वा ब्रह्मानन्दे निमज्जताम् ‘*Vishnum dhyaaye`t tu dheeryad vaa brahmaanande`nimajjataam.*’ You can meditate on Bhagwan, or you can practice Yoga and go into a Samadhi. What harm will it do to me? Why should I insist upon your doing any particular activity? You are holding on to your separate individuality. Your साधन-साध्य *saadhan-saadhya* (efforts and goals) are based on your individuality, attached to you like a tail! What can I say to you? The person who is given up by the Gnani is caught by an agnani. The one who is unknown to the agnani is called the Brahman by the Gnani.

Real Sanyas is when you realize that your essence is the eternal, non-dual consciousness in every being, and is not separate from the Brahman. To give up agnan is true Sanyas. Sanyas means wearing the saffron robe ordained for the Sanyas Ashram. It means having a danda –kamandalu. This, too, is for those who are eligible. It is certainly not meant for gathering a group of unsuitable candidates.

The tradition of our Dandi Swamis (Monks who carry a staff and have no fixed abode) is extraordinary! Anyhow, now even they speak about increasing their numbers. These days even cooks want to take Sanyas when they grow old, and take up a danda! Narayana! This is karma-sanyas – it is giving up work!

Krama Sanyas (accepting Sanyas after going through the three earlier Ashrams of life) is suitable for the Ashramis. I am not talking about that Sanyas.

Yes! Real Sanyas is only when a person gets the direct experience of his essence. It is unrelated to the dress or religious Sect of the person. My brother, this Sanyas Ashram is no majhab. न यतेराश्रमप्रायो धर्महेतुर्महात्मनः ‘*Na yate`raashramapraayo dharmahetumahaatmanah.*’

Om Shantih! Shantih! Shantih!

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Madhyastha Ki Bhoomika

The position of Neutrality

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

You are. What more do you want? You know that you exist. What more do you need to know? If there is nothing you desire and nothing that you need to know – then, there is no आनन्द *aananda* (happiness, bliss, comfort, total contentment) greater than this.

This Atma is the essence of Gnan. Atma means Gnan. The Atma means the Brahman that is beyond the limits of space, time and matter. The Atma means Vaikuntha (the abode of Bhagwan Vishnu); it means Goloka (the abode of Shri Krishna); it means Saket (the abode of Shri Rama). It also means Swargaloka (the Heaven where Indra is the King of the Devtas), and of Martyaloka (our mortal world).

Nothing exists except the Atma. Nothing exists except Gnan. Only a person who believes himself to be the body imagines that अज्ञान *agnaana* (lack of Gnan; ignorance) is real. All the differences are seen because we do not know that our Atma is the essence of Gnan. People have superimposed संस्कार *sanskaara* (subtle subconscious impressions) on these differences, making them good or bad. This is the cause of राग *raaga* (attachment) and द्वेष *dve'sha* (aversion). This is the cause of सुख-दुःख *sukha-dukha* (happiness-sorrow).

The meaning of Sanyas Jayanti (the anniversary of taking Sanyas) is to show respect to our Vedic system of Varnashrama (dividing society into four status levels called the Varna' and four stages of life, called 'Ashram'. The celibate student is in the Brahmacharya Ashram. The married householder is in the Grihastha Ashram. The retired middle-aged person who turns towards spirituality is in the Vanaprastha Ashram, and the man who takes the vows of renunciation is in the Sanyas Ashram. The four Varnas are the Brahmins, who studied and taught the Shastras, and advised the rulers. The Kshatriyas, who were warriors who ruled the people. The Vaishyas were traders, and the Shudras were laborers who also did the lowly tasks like cleaning the night soil.)

Our body has feet to enable us to move around, a stomach to give nutrition, hands for self-defense, and a head above them all, in which to store Gnan. The body has Shudras, Vaishyas, Kshatriyas and Brahmins. Similarly, it has Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vanaprasthi and Sanyasi. The Shudra and Brahmachari abide in the legs. The Vaishya and Grihastha abide in the stomach. The Kshatriya and the Vanaprasthis abide in the arms, and the Brahmin and Sanyasi abide in the head.

The upper portion of the body has a predominance of Gnan. The head is filled with Gnan. It is the Brahmin and Sanyasi. Society is headed by the Brahmin and the Sanyasi.

The fact is that the arrangement made by the Shastras for society is such that if a person gives it some thought, he will understand the significance of the Varna and Ashram systems. He will obtain an understanding about the Virat-Vaishwanara (the gross world), Taijas-Hiranyagarbha (the subtle world), Pragya-Ishwara (the divine influences) and the Turiya Tattva (the ultimate essence that is sublime).

The Shudra and Brahmachari are the Virat-Vaishwanara. The Vaishya and Grihastha are the Taijas and Hiranyagarbha. The Kshatriya and Vanaprastha are the Pragya and Ishwara. The Brahmin and Sanyas are the Turiya Tattva. The head of the Tattva (essence) is the Turiya (the unmanifest Brahman).

When we go to Kashi, (Varanasi), the Kashi that covers an area of eighty four kosas (one kosa is two miles) is the Virat-Vaishwanara. The twenty four kosas of Varanasi is the Taijas-Hiranyagarbha. The inner Kashi is the Pragya-Ishwara, and the अभिमुक्त क्षेत्र *avimukta kshe`tra* (the place where actions give no fruit) is the Turiya.

Whether it is the creating of the Varna or Ashram, or the society – यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे *yathaa pinde` tathaa brahmaande`* - what is in this body is the same as what is in the cosmos. This system of the Varna-Ashram is highly scientific. It is made by people who had great experience. The Mahatmas have studied the Vedas in depth, and experienced the truths revealed in them, and only then did they ascertain the Varnashram system as the ideal.

नाचगमा धृत्ये धर्मस्य तर्केण व्यवतिष्ठते *Naachagamaa ghritye` dharmasya tarke`na vyavatishtato*. If we did not have the support of the Vedas – the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda – we would not be able to establish Dharma through logic.

ऋषीणामपि यदज्ञानं तद् त्यागमहेतुकम् *Risheenaamapi yadgyaanam tad tyagamahe`tukam*. The Gnan obtained by the Rishis, is also from the Vedas and the Upanishads. In present times, we are gradually forgetting our Varnashram system. We are losing sight of it; we are losing it. It is being broken. We should, at least once a year, remember the purifying facts about how our Rishis and Maharshis had organized a society based on the Vedas and Upanishads, into the Varnas of Shudras, Vaishya, Kshatriya and Brahmin; and the Ashrams of Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyas.

The Sanyas Ashram is that part of the life of a human being, when we become free of worldly concerns, and are established in the Atma that is the essence of Gnan.

Life is not just earning money; nor is it only for earning wealth. Life is not merely an existence of indulgences; nor is it only for indulging in pleasures. Life is not accumulating possessions; nor is it for mere accumulation. Life should also contain त्याग *tyaaga* (giving up, discarding and sacrificing) and वैराग्य *vairaagya* (detachment, renunciation) वैराग्यरागो-पाधिभ्यां आम्नातो भयलक्षणात् *‘Vairaagyaraago-paadhibhyaam aamnaato bhayalakshanaat.’*

The Shrimad Bhagwat says, ‘The अन्तः करण *antahkaran* (fourfold mind, or subtle body) of a human being is of two types. One is dominated by राग-द्वेष *raaga-dve'sha* (attachment-aversion), and the other is predominantly detached – it has वैराग्य *vairagya*. Dharma is ascertained differently for them. The Dharma for people who have attachments and aversions is to accumulate material wealth, do charity, and cultivate non-attachment. For the people who have a natural *vairagya*, Dharma is to do त्याग *tyaaga* (give up unnecessary possessions), withdraw from worldly activities, and meditate on the Atma.

The question is raised in the Shrimad Bhagwat, as to whether a Grihastha (married householder) can attain the same state as the अवधूत *avadhoota* (wandering Monk) who has renunciation. It is stated clearly, in the fourteenth and fifteenth chapters of the seventh canto, that if a Grihastha follows the norms set down for the Grihastha Ashram, he can also attain the fruits of Sanyas.

The main factor in this is to reduce the identification with the body, and reduce possessiveness for things that are outside the body. The Grihasthas should use what they have, for serving others. So much so that they should use their beloved wife, son, and body, to serve Bhagwan who abides in all beings. A Grihastha's life becomes like a Sanyasi's, when he does this.

This system of Varna (status in society) is being forgotten in the कलि कला *kali kaala* (the age of Kali, when all the negative tendencies flourish), and so is our system of Ashram (stage in life). The present tendency is to do, and eat, whatever you feel like. सजग्धी सपीती प्रचारणाय कृतावताराय। नमः कलहैः, धर्मैः कलहैः विहितविग्रहाय। *Sajagdhee sapeetee prachaaraneeya kritaavataaraya. Namah kalahaih, dharmaih kalahaih vihitavigrahaaya.*

This is the tremendous power of the Kali Yuga (the eon called Kali). The system of Dharma prescribed for the four Varnas and four Ashrams is vanishing because of the influence of the Kali Yuga. However, this system is a very important method of the social structure. It is a method that benefits everybody.

We should use this method to develop our character during the Brahmacharya Ashram (as a celibate student). We should practice restraint during the Grihastha Ashram (as a married householder). During the Vanaprastha Ashram (retiring from the world and turning towards Bhagwan) we should practice abstaining from indulgences, and in the Sanyas Ashram, we should be established in our essence. We should obtain Bhagwan! Our Vedic system of Ashram Dharma in India had this method of moving gradually towards Sanyas, and it was an excellent system.

Look what is happening now! Those who are involved in hoarding wealth continue to accumulate, and those who suffer pangs of hunger continue to suffer from acute poverty. An avadhoota Sanyasi stands in-between. He maintains a neutral position, preventing status-oriented clashes. He establishes peace in society. To the wealthy, his message is, ‘My brother, you increase your wealth at the cost of others. You try to be

happy while making others suffer and go hungry. You harass them in order to accumulate more and more wealth. Oh, don't accumulate so much! Look! I remain happy without having any wealth at all!'

To the poor, the neutral Sanyasi gives the message, 'My brother, why do you want to accumulate wealth? Why do you want to fight, causing bloodshed? Why do you seek to indulge in violence? Why do you want to spread strife and ill-will? Oh, can happiness ever be found in wealth? Look! I have no wealth, yet I am happy. A happy life is the secret of the mind. It is the secret of being satisfied with that we have.'

गोधन गजधन वाजिधन और रतनधनखान।

जब आवे संतोष धन सब धन धूरि समान॥

Godhana gajadhana vaajidhana aur ratanadhanakhaana,

Jaba aave` santosha dhana saba dhana dhoori samaana.

(The wealth of cows, elephants, gems, etc, is dust compared to the wealth of contentment.)

The life of a Sanyasi with true renunciation teaches the wealthy to give up material considerations. It teaches the very poor to be content with what they have. The life of a Sanyasi teaches people how to lead a life of peace and happiness. His position of neutrality is to be acknowledged, otherwise there would be no end to the strife between the rich and the poor.

Narayana! If it is not possible for you to become a Sanyasi with renunciation, at least let there be a feeling of renunciation in your heart. Let the things you have accumulated be used to benefit others. If you can use your wealth for charity, it is very good.

All right. If you are unable to give away your possessions, at least use your wealth while you are alive; otherwise, it will be destroyed. Wealth has never belonged to anybody for long, nor will it remain with anyone in future. Those who accumulated it had to leave it and depart. Ultimately, they had no option but to give it away to others. Wealth that is accumulated through oppression and injustice was wasted by the very people who accumulated it, in encouraging sinful activities. Thieves stole it, dacoits looted it, and the Government confiscated it. Use the wealth you have accumulated, to benefit people.

तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः मा गृधःकस्यस्विद् धनम्।

'Te`na tyakte`na bhunjeethaa maa gridhah kasyasvad ghanam.'

Narayana! I accept the Sanyas Jayanti with the viewpoint of safeguarding our ancient Vedic system of Varnasharam. At least once in a year, you can remember that Sanyas has some utility in our lives. This is also an excellent thing. We will conclude today's talk here.

Om Shantih Shantih Shantih

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Abhinandan-nivedan

Offering a Tribute

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

The Shrimad Bhagwat has an episode in which the question is raised, as to why Bhagwan accepts the respect and honor offered by people. Bhagwan has no need of demonstrations of respect!

All right; it is not even that Bhagwan feels any joy or satisfaction from the tributes given to Him. He is always fully satisfied within Himself. He is the essence of supreme bliss. It is stated, in this episode, that if a man wants to decorate his reflection in the mirror, it can't be done by decorating the mirror. The only way to decorate the *pratbimba* (the reflection of an object) is by decorating the *बिम्ब bimba* (the actual object). If you apply sandal paste on your forehead, your reflection will also have sandal paste on the forehead. A garland placed round your neck will be reflected in your image in the mirror.

यद् यद् जनो भगवते विदधीत मानं तच्चात्मने प्रतिमुखस्य यथामुखश्रीः ।

*Yad yad jano bhagavate` vidadheeta maanam tachaاتمने` pratimukhasya
yathaamukhashreeh.*

When a man garlands an image of Bhagwan, it appears as though he is garlanding Bhagwan. The garland, however, is actually placed round his own neck. Nobody shows respect to any other. The fact is that honor given to someone is not given to another. The person who gives the honor is the one who gets it.

Narayana! What I mean to say is that when you seat someone on a lofty throne, put a tilak (mark of respect) on his forehead, and place a beautiful garland round his neck, it is possible that that person is unworthy of the respect you show him. However, there is no doubt whatsoever, of the goodwill in your heart. It is quite possible that the man on the throne deserves the respect, and it is equally possible that he doesn't. But the goodwill and magnanimity in your heart is undoubted. You all walk long distances, and sit at a lower level for hours. You endure discomfort if the fans and mike don't work due to a power failure. There is no doubt that the asceticism in your heart is praiseworthy.

A man, who is considered to be great in society, may be a hypocrite. The one who offers him respect does so with a heart filled with goodwill. A man who is considered great can be wicked, but a person who feels respect has the virtue of श्रद्धा *shraddhaa* (faith). This noble quality deserves appreciation.

Narayana! The great man is not the one who sits on a high seat; the one who gives the high seat to another is great. From my side, I congratulate all of you for your magnanimity in giving me this honor. I express my gratitude for your goodwill and nobility.

Narayana! I want to say one thing about अभिनन्दन ‘*abhinandan*’ (congratulations or felicitation), because it is somewhat contrary to the truth. What is it? Narayana! Sadhus from all the सम्प्रदाय *sampradaya* (religious schools of thought) love me. I have no attachment or aversion for any school of thought. I meet Padres. I do not remember the name of the Father – Dada can tell you the name – but, he meets me very affectionately. I also meet Maulvis. Parsis meet me with overwhelming affection. They take me to their Annual functions whenever possible. The Jain Mahatma, Muni Rakeshji Maharaj, gives me a lot of love. He comes quite often to meet me. Goswami Dikshitji Maharaj of the Vallabh Sampradaya comes to me whenever he feels like it. Govindlalji Maharaj of Shrinathji also comes to me. At Vrindavan, the Acharyas (Masters) of Shri Ramanuja Sampradaya, Nimbarka Sampradaya and Radhavallabh Sampradaya also come to me. The Acharya of the Gaudeshwara Sampradaya comes to me daily after his morning walk. He has a deep affection for me, and invites me to all their functions. I eat at the homes of the Udasi (a sect of people who have turned away from the world), and at the homes of Sanyasis. I have great affection for Udasis, Sanyasis, Vaishnavs, Shaktas, Tantriks and others.

Narayana! Whenever there is some dispute about Sadhus, regarding the Sampradaya from which the Chairman should be appointed, these people place me in the middle, to avoid conflicting opinions. When the question rose as to which Sampradaya should the Sadhu chosen from, to be the Chairman of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, they forcibly put my name there. To the best of my knowledge, the Bharat Sadhu Samaj is in no way connected to Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru or the Government. This is one point.

Another point I want to tell you about is that in the revolution for banning cow slaughter, Shri Karpatriji Maharaj, Shri Shankaracharyaji Maharaj, the present President of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, and the present Minister, all faced a beating. They were injured. Some went on a hunger strike, and some were badly injured. This is not a Government Department. This is an NGO (Non-government Organization).

I will also tell you that when Karpatriji Maharaj founded the Akhil Bharatiya Sadhu Sangh, he appointed me as the Vice President. The Ved Bhagwan (the Lord in the form of the Vedas) was President, and I was Vice President. When the Sarvabhauama Sadhu Mandli was formalized, people made me the head. I am aware of the great love people have for me.

In presence of this large gathering, I declare that I have neither attachment nor aversion towards any Sampradaya. I have no partiality or prejudice, no love or hatred, for any religious sect. To my eyes, all the Sampradayas are different manifestations of our Brahman, Bhagwan, Paramartha, and the eternal Satya (existence or truth). None is small and none is great in the Brahman. I greet all the Sampradayas – Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Parsi, and others – as my own Atma. आत्मैवेदं सर्वम्। ब्रह्मैवेदं

सर्वम्। स एवेदं सर्वम्। अहमवेदं सर्वम्। ‘*Aatmaive`dam sarvam. Brahmaive`dam sarvam. Sa e`ve`dam sarvam. Ahameve`dam sarvam.*’

Narayana! Regarding Satya and Dharma, I say that we cannot leave it to any individual to interact in society as directed by his अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (fourfold mind). This is absolutely true, even today. Not even the President or the Prime Minister can behave as they like. Even they have to abide by the Constitution. Don’t you agree? Of course you agree fully! There will be anarchy if the Government does not abide by the Constitution. Do you know what will be the consequences of giving importance to what an individual says? People will say that the Governor said this, and the Minister said that; this is what the Prime Minister said, and that is what the President said, etc. Can you imagine what the result would be? Some of these people are changed in four years and some in five. Some will be from one State and not from other States. Some will belong to one community and Sampradaya, but not to others. A complete misrule will spread over the world. You think that your discovery – that a Nation should not be left to the whims of an individual – is very modern. You think that your realization about a country being run according to the Constitution is progressive thinking. You think that your ideas about the whole world coming under one basic Constitution is revolutionary!

Don’t you realize that thousands of years ago our Rishis and Maharshis had understood through their own experience, that the world cannot be controlled by machines and inventions? It cannot be held together by merely depending upon the superiority of people. An ethical framework is essential for the world to be well governed and united. And for this, a Constitution is essential.

Narayana! We don’t want to dance as per the whims of any individual. We don’t want to become the puppets of an individual’s impulses. Yes, we do want that even these individuals are kept within the framework of our eternal laws. This viewpoint is very modern and revolutionary.

Dharma and अधर्म *adharma* (that, which is contrary to Dharma) are not judged by the good or bad qualities of any object. Modern science also believes that Dharma and adharma do not abide in objects. Tell me, now; is it Dharma to fold your hands, or to raise them in supplication? It depends on the law of the land, as to which is Dharma. Dharma and adharma do not rest in the action.

All right, if it is left to the sentiments of the people, to do Dharma according to what they feel is right, it is possible that a man begins to feel a brotherly love for his wife!

Narayana! Individual whims cannot be the deciding factor for the rituals of Dharma. It can even happen that a man has lustful feelings for his daughter, sister, or mother. Lust is a powerful emotion. The control of Dharma and adharma cannot be delegated to mere emotions and desires. The control must be as per the Constitution of Dharma.

In the same way, who is a Mahapurush? Who is a Sant (Saint)? Who is a Sadhu? There are people who boast about how great they are. They claim to have the authority to flout

the ancient laws of right and wrong. They claim that they have the right to create a new Constitution for themselves, and give new interpretations of पाप *paapa* (sin) and पुण्य *punya* (meritorious deeds). They want to logically justify keeping beautiful women and dancers of both sexes near them. They want to use these young people to attract other young people, and arouse desires in them, and leave it to their discretion to judge their Dharma and adharma! This can never continue.

It is the greatness of the Vedas and our Shastras. The deciding factor about Dharma and adharma has to be according to the Vedas and the Shastras. It has to be in keeping with the Constitution. This is the best arrangement for society today, and in future.

Narayana! Neither the Brahman, nor Maya (the Lord's power of delusion), nor Prakriti (Nature), nor the five elements have the capacity to keep society controlled. Only the Constitution can do this. This is universally accepted even today, and it will be accepted in the future. Even when science reaches its highest pinnacle, it will accept this fact.

Where the Constitution is related to solving urgent current problems, it becomes necessary to make changes in it. When the Constitution is for the eternal truths, there is no need to change it in any way. Our Ishwara, our Brahman, our Atma, and our oneness, is in keeping with the Constitution. It is based on the eternal truths, the shaashwat satya, the eternal existence. Society should be run on this principle. Only a person who has experienced the Paramatma – the Satya – according to this Constitution is authorized to declare what the essence of the Brahman – the Atma – is. No other person has the authority to give an authentic interpretation.

Narayana! Now I want to tell you that रस *rasa* (deep enriching emotion) has an important place in our life. You see, it is not possible for a person to interact in society only on the strength of knowing Satya. Satya and Gnan are not enough for our lives. The life of a human contains a factor called आनन्द रस '*aananda rasa*'. A person may pass his life with the support of Satya, provided his antahkaran is pure from the very beginning. If his antahkaran is pure to start with, he can pass his life supported by Gnan. Narayana! If the antahkaran is not pure, then he cannot live with the support of only Satya and Gnan, even if he knows the Satya and has true Gnan.

A third and essential factor that is needed in the life of a man is rasa. We are inclined towards pleasure, even if it means going against Satya. We are inclined to indulge, going contrary to our Gnan. Bhakti for Bhagwan – भगवत् भक्ति *bhagvatbhakti* – is essential if we are to develop a desire for obtaining the eternal Satya, and experience rasa in our lives. There is a great need to develop भगवत्प्रेम *bhagvatpre`ma* (love for Bhagwan), to develop a desire for the eternal Gnan, and experience supreme bliss.

A person who lives in society, but has not cultivated the ability to love, leads an arid life. Even in the life of Paramartha (spirituality, seeking the Supreme), there is a need for rasa; otherwise, a spiritual life becomes dry and joyless.

Narayana! This essence of rasa is given the name of Rama, or Krishna, or Shiva. It is called Narayana, the bliss of Samadhi, or the bliss of the Atma. It is described as Brahmanananda (the ananda of the Brahman). We ascertain bhakti in order to cultivate rasa in a bright and pure life, in the eternal Satya, and in Gnan.

A friend of mine tells me, ‘Swamiji, we will give such teaching to people, and spread education to such an extent, that an ethical society will be created.’ Narayana! Just imagine – even if you educate everybody, won’t there be some who are foolish? Can everybody’s intellect be of the same level? Will newborn babies get educated in a day? Will insanity be eradicated? It is a false dream to imagine that society can be controlled by education.

All right; I ask you one question – don’t educated people take bribes? When I see the state of the educated, I have to say that it is they who are more corrupt. If the higher-ups in the Government and business groups did not take bribes, corruption would not have entered the lower ranks. Had immoral activities been avoided by those in high positions, the lower levels would have avoided them as well.

Actually – यद् यद् आचरति श्रेष्ठः तद् तदेवेतरो जनाः। ‘*Yad yad aacharati shre’shthah tad tade’ve’taro janaah.*’ The common people follow the example set by their superiors. When people see that those who go abroad take alcohol and offer drinks to others, how can the people who aspire to move in high society desist from doing the same? Even here, when people drink and offer drinks to their guests, their staff also become habitual drinkers. I can state clearly that it is mostly the educated who indulge in drinking, adultery, scheming craftily, cheating, and deceit.

Now tell me, how can we believe that people can be made ethical merely on the strength of education? That is precisely why I say that a rasa – a feeling of enjoyment – has to be introduced into the people’s lives and ethical outlooks. Rasa should be a part of Satya and Dharma.

Shri Malviyaji Maharaj had heard the Shrimad Bhagwat from me once. At that time, the topic came up about what Gandhiji had written on one occasion. ‘I had read the Shrimad Bhagwat, but did not get the fruit, of getting rasa in Dharma, that I should have got. It was only when I heard the purifying Shrimad Bhagwat from Shri Malviyaji that Dharma rasa came into my life.’ This note written by Gandhiji can be seen even today. The joy of Dharma came into his life after he listened to the Shrimad Bhagwat.

Narayana! I also have something to say to our Comrade Brothers. They believe that everybody will become honest and ethical when poverty is eradicated. But we see how sinful and unethical people in affluent countries are. Please tell me, when people are not poor, is their antahkaran pure? Aren’t the wealthy also immoral? It seems to me that people who have great wealth also have great immorality and sins. In fact, since they have greater means, many cars, more money, and other things that attract women, their level of sin is greater. A rich man has a couple of bottles of drink every day. The people in a wealthy family have drinks worth a couple of hundred rupees on a daily basis. I

know this. Dr. Jain called me one day, and said, ‘Swamiji, please tell that Seth (wealthy businessman) to stop drinking. If he takes any more drinks he is sure to die.’

I have seen far more of the wealthy going to Clubs, compared to the poorer people. I have seen many more of them having intimate relations with film stars. I have seen the wealthy become depraved in far greater numbers. In this respect, I admire the poor.

What I want to tell you is that it is wrong to expect people to become upright by increasing their income. Those who dream of the whole society becoming absolutely honorable when our country becomes prosperous are absolutely mistaken. An increase in wealth cannot increase morality, culture, and Dharma. For this, there is a different method.

The method for improving the morality, culture and Dharma in society is to increase rasa for morality, Dharma, Satya, and the Ishwara. This will encourage the people to endure poverty and hardship, and obtain rasa in living an ethical life, and in their Dharma. They will enjoy self-restraint, whether they are stupid or clever. What is vital is that people should obtain satisfaction in giving up, in asceticism, in Dharma, in self-restraint, in the Ishwara, and in Satya, whatever their condition may be. Whether they are poor or rich, ignorant or learned, in our own country or elsewhere; no matter where, or in what condition they are, they should value these values. What I mean to say is that the rising of Dharma rasa is essential for turning our lives towards Satya, the Ishwara, Dharma, upright behavior, and purity. Furthermore, bhakti is the only way this Dharma rasa can come into our lives. No other method will work.

Narayana! I have reached this conclusion after considerable effort. I have sat in solitude and given it deep thought. I have gone into Samadhi, and thought about the matter with total impartiality. I have seen all the Sampradayas as my own Atma, and recognized that this whole world is the manifestation of the Paramatma. I made sure that there was no impurity in my antahkaran. Then I came to the conclusion that unless and until bhakti rasa, Dharma rasa, and Gnan rasa are created, nobody can work successfully for the good of society. No matter which part of the world a man is in – he may be one of a forest tribe, or a small town, or a large city. He may be living in America, Russia, China, Pakistan or some other country; however, it is only when he gets rasa that he will succeed in restraining the wrong urges, and help to create an ethical society. This is why people, who concentrate on कर्मशुद्धि *karmashuddhi* (the purification of actions) and द्रव्यशुद्धि *dravyashuddhi* (the purification of items) without trying for antahkaran shuddhi, are not seen to be very successful.

I know that there is a need for material comforts in life. Food production should be increased in our country. This beggarly attitude of importing grains is humiliating for the people. They feel, ‘Oh, we eat food given by that country.’ It is better to have just one meal a day rather than beg others for food. Our country should become self sufficient in food.

The production of clothes also needs to be increased. More and better machinery should be manufactured. More dams should be built, and we should have electricity for all. More scientific inventions are needed. We need to increase our Gnan, and the scientific application of our knowledge.

There is also a need to enhance knowledge about the Gandharva Veda, Ayur Veda, Dhanur Veda and Sthapatya Veda in the people. Progress in the areas of dance, music, medical treatment, engineering, painting, sculpture etc is also desirable. We should not be backward in any of the many other arts and skills that our country is so rich in.

All right, all this should be done. That is very good. But when will all this be achieved? We get swept off our feet by little things. We lose ourselves over trifles. It is as though our heart is of no importance; our Atma has no value. People demean themselves over small things. They tell lies, deceive others, and are treacherous. They lower themselves in their own eyes. Sorrow increases daily as a result of this moral poverty. Sorrow, fear, strife, and dissatisfaction are on the rise.

A friend of mine has asked me to definitely say something about प्रेम *pre`ma* (pure love). Time is short. Today, you have felicitated me, expressing your deep gratitude. I state publicly that neither do I display any supernatural powers, nor do I possess any magic. I have no faith in magical tricks, and know nothing about them. My relationship with the Ishwara is not based on belief or faith; it is based on direct experience. My connection with the Ishwara, my relationship with Him, is not a matter of belief or faith. It is based on personal experience. So, I am able to tell you unequivocally, to have a दर्शन *darshan* (see with reverence) of Bhagwan smiling in your heart. See the smiling Shri Krishnachandra in your heart. See Shri Ramachandra smiling lovingly, in your own heart. See how lovingly Shri Krishnachandra smiles at you.

Look into your heart and see how Bhagwan Shankar – who is easily propitiated – looks at you with Grace. See Lord Narayana showering Grace, in your heart. Whoever your Ishta (chosen form of worship) is, see Him in your heart. This is the key to happiness.

Look inside your heart. You will see Bhagwan there. He is smiling. He is looking at you with love in His eyes. His eyes shower Grace on you. This is the art of turning sorrow into happiness. No sorrow will be able to touch you as long as you focus on this image of Bhagwan. You should take it as the boon of the Rishis. Understand that it is the art of separating yourself from being connected to sorrow.

If a time comes when sorrow, fear, or suffering come into your life, think lovingly about Bhagwan. Imagine either that you are meeting Him, or that you are being separated from Him. It is not enough to simply believe in Him. It is not enough to believe that He exists. The Ishwara exists, and we fold our hands to Him, but that is not enough. It is one thing to believe in the Ishwara, and it is another thing when bhakti rasa enters the heart. Bhakti rasa comes into the heart when a spurt of joy at meeting Bhagwan – or a pang of sorrow at being parted from Him – is felt.

Understand that this bhakti rasa is a part of your life. Let the feeling of being with Bhagwan bring an overwhelming joy into your life. Whether your happiness increases, or whether you weep at being separated from Him, your heart should experience sorrow for none other than your Bhagwan. Let your heart savor the rasa caused by the feelings of meeting, or being separated from Bhagwan. May your life be filled with comfort, peace, and joy. May it be free of sorrow, fear, suffering and strife.

Narayana! I have placed the substance before you without holding anything back, unmotivated by any other consideration or deviousness. I have revealed the whole truth, keeping nothing hidden. I repeat a verse by Goswamiji to you.

शंकर साखी जो राखि कहैं कछु, तो जरि जीह जीह गरौ।

अपनो भलो राम नाम ही ते, तुलसी समुझि परयौ।।

भरोसो जाहि दूसरो सो करो।

Shankara saakhee jo rakhee kahaun kachhu, to jari jeeha garau,

Apano bhalo raama naama heete`, tulasee samujhee paryo.

Bhrosojaahi doosaro so karo.

Tulsidasji Maharaj says, ‘Shankar Bhagwan is my witness; if I conceal anything when I speak, let my tongue be burnt and fall off. All that I have understood is that I will gain good fortune only from the name of Rama. If anyone else depends on some other support for his good fortune, he is welcome to do so. For me, the name of Rama is my support for getting salvation.’

Narayana! I tell you this – it is true that nothing else exists, except the Paramatma. Bhagwan is all that exists. So, weaken your worldly attachments and aversions. Reduce them, and connect your lives with Bhagwan. Your wealth will not be diminished, but Dharma will come into it. Ultimately, it will bring you liberation. You will get the darshan of Bhagwan. The greatest thing is that you will obtain the personal experience of rasa coming into your life.

Now, I do not want to say anything more at this moment. I salute the sincere felicitations you have given to me. I express my gratitude for your generosity. I make a humble supplication to you – a sincere plea – that you link your life with Bhagwan. If you take the name of Bhagwan every day, do ritual chanting, help the poor, and comfort the sorrowful; it is a very good thing. If you respond to my appeal by increasing your साधना *saadhanaa* (effort for spiritual progress)-upaasanaa (ritual worship), take the Lord’s name five more times, if you add one extra paisa to the money kept aside for charity, if you try to never knowingly cause trouble for anyone – then I have not the slightest doubt that the trouble I have taken to come here, and the trouble you have taken to hear my talk, will result in giving success in a very nice way. You will definitely attain much success in life. You will obtain the greatest happiness, bliss, and rasa.

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Rama!

Grihasta Ka Lakshya

The Goal of the Grihasta

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

विश्वदर्पणदृश्यमान-नगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया ।

यः साक्षात्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्रयं तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥

सा दृष्टिः सूक्ष्मलक्ष्या स्थिरचरविषया वासनास्पर्शशून्या,

सा दृष्टिर्दृश्यमुक्तं करणमिव परं समप्रसादैकरूपा ।

सा दृष्टिर्यत्र नान्यत् सकलमविकलं ब्रह्म प्रत्यक् प्रशान्तं,

श्रीपूर्णानन्दनेत्रद्वयरसविलसत् कोणकारुण्यमात्रम् ॥

Vishvamarpanadrishyamaana-nagareetulyam nijaantaragatam,

Pashyanaatmani maayayaa bahirivodbhootam yathaa nidrayaa,

Yah saakshaatkurute`prabodhasamaye`svaatmaaname`vaadvayam,

Tasmai shreegurumoortaye`nama idam shreedakshinaamoortaye`.

Saa drishtih sookshmalakshyaa sthiracharavishayaa vaasanaasparshashoonyaa,

Saa drishtirdrishyamuktam karanamiva param samprasaadaikaroopaa,

Saa drishtiryatra naanyat sakalamavikalam brahma pratyak prashaantam,

Shreepoornaanandane`tradvayarasavilasat konakaarunyamaatram.

The lives of those who are completely preoccupied with making money and indulging in worldly pleasures also need to get some rest and relaxation. If people spend all their time only in earning and indulgences, they will certainly enjoy the days, but their nights will never be happy. People have got into the habit of just working and earning. It is as though making money is the sum total of existence. The only thing they do is to indulge more and more in worldly pleasures. As if there is no scope in life for त्याग *tyaaga* (giving up) at all.

People talk and talk! It is as though life has no scope for मौन *mauna* (remaining silent). Narayana! People's lifestyle has become such that earning, indulging, and talking is their only focus in life. It has become their compulsive habit.

The fact is that this is not a complete way of living. People become mentally unbalanced when they work ceaselessly, without proper rest. They go mad if they stay awake and are deprived of sleep. People who go on eating without digesting the food also go mad. A human being needs to lead a balanced life. He needs to balance work with rest, staying awake with sleeping, eating with his capacity for digesting. All this should be orderly and systematic. It should be balanced and well-adjusted. It is a very important factor in the system of तत्त्वज्ञान *tattvagnaana* (the Gnan of the essence of the Brahman).

We understand the Tattva (essence) by making four divisions of it. They are: Vishwa-Vaishwanara, Taijas-Hiranyagarbha, Pragya-Ishwara and Turiya-Brahman. The life of the Vishwa-Vaishwanara is the life of a Brahmachari (celibate student). To absorb the sense objects during the waking hours is the life of the Vishwa-Vaishwanara.

The life of Taijas-Hiranyagarbha is the life of a Vaishya (the trader class). It is the life of a Grihastha (married householder). It is dominated by planning and organizing.

The life of the Pragya-Ishwara is the life of a Kshatriya (warrior). It is the life of Vanaprastha (middle age, when people turn to spirituality). This is dominated by destruction. Being one with the Ishwara is the life of a Kshatriya. A Kshatriya becomes a King, goes into battle, and kills. The destruction-dominated life of a Kshatriya is the life of the Pragya-Ishwara.

The life of the Turiya-Brahman is the life of a Brahmin (priest). It is the life of Sanyas. The life of a Brahmin is to be one with the Brahman. It is the life of Sanyas. People who study the Shastras know that we try to understand Sanyas through these four divisions.

I am telling you something; actually, Sanyas is not something artificial that it can be assumed by putting on saffron clothes or some other outer sign of renunciation. Sanyas is a truth in our life. When you recognize this truth, you will know that it is present in your life as well. Yes! If you place it only in saffron clothes, how will it be seen in your life?

Give a little honest thought to this. Does your life contain attachment for anyone? What is it that you cannot give up? Narayana! The fact is that you are unattached. You have the capacity to give up everything. Know yourself.

Look; when anger rises in your mind, do you tell people that you felt angry with that person? Oh, no! You don't reveal your anger; you hide it behind a smile. I know a gentleman. Whenever he gets angry, he gives a loud laugh. Yes! This guffaw is a sign of his anger. This gentleman has grown a long beard so that people cannot see the signs of anger on his face. He is very hot tempered, but instead of expressing his anger, he laughs loudly. Thus, he succeeds in hiding his anger, but others get to know that he is angry. This is one way of showing anger, isn't it? Yes! The intelligent people get the hint, and his habit of laughing is maintained. Sitaram! Who is ours, in this world, on whom we can get angry? Why should we sully our heart and brain? When we see with तत्त्वदृष्टि *tattvadrishhti* (the viewpoint of the Tattva) everything is our own essence. Does anyone get angry with himself? They don't. Isn't that so?

All right, observe one thing. Desire comes into your heart. You experience lust. Women also experience desire and lust. So do men. Look, even those who wear the clothes of a Sanyasi feel desire and lust. So do the Grihasthas.

Is there any man who tells his wife, 'I felt attracted to that woman today'? Tell me, now, what man would do so? Had the man been fully attached to his wife he would tell her his every thought. To their wife, men pretend to be thorough gentlemen.

Who is the wife who tells her husband that her desire is aroused when she sees a certain man? Well, tell me – where does total attachment exist?

Attachment is for our own self, isn't it? Our secrets should be safely hidden within us. Our secret thoughts should not be exposed. Even the person we feel attracted to should not know about it. We become a secret lover, hiding our desire from even the object we desire.

Very well, what about mothers? Faults are present even in the lives of mothers. The children are aware of them. They generally know what fault their mother has. They get to know somehow, overhearing things. However, a man doesn't tell his wife, 'My mother has this fault.' If he does, he is a fool!

Do we tell people about the faults in the life of our daughter? Oh, we maintain absolute silence regarding her faults. Sitaram! We never tire of telling people about her excellent qualities, decorum and nature. We declare our daughter to be cultured, prudent and a paragon of virtues.

Look, the wife wants that her husband should not tell his mother about how much money he gives her, or how much he loves her. The mother thinks, 'I have borne him in my womb. He is my son. So, he should not tell his wife all my secrets.' Thus, we hide some things about our wife from our mother, and some things about our mother from our wife.

We conceal facts about our father from our son. Nor do we tell our father everything about our son. We cover up for our son to our brother. This means that we keep ourselves aloof from the world to some extent. We are not fully attached to anybody. In some way, we are detached from everyone. A little detached from our wife, a little from our mother, and a little from our son.

All right, other people apart, we even get detached from our body, if it troubles us. We detach ourselves from our body at that time. Aloofness comes into our life at that time. Where does it come from? What is its source? Sanyas is a truth in the life of a human being. It is present even in your life. Take a look.

You may have fallen asleep during the discourse. You may be snoring, with your body slouched sideways. However, if I were to ask you if you had dozed off, you will deny it at once. You will stand up to show how alert you are. All right, if I ask, 'Have you ever stolen anything?' You will say, 'Maharaj, do you want to insult me in public?' Isn't it so? You see, a human being has the feeling that he is always awake. He considers himself to be free of faults.

All, what if I say, 'You are very miserly. You don't give even one paisa in charity.' You will say, 'I am always doing charity. Your accusations are baseless.'

What is all this? To have greed, and show that we are not greedy. To have anger, and hide it. To have desire and pose as though we are free of desire. Why is this done? The fact is that you are actually beyond criticism; you are actually without faults. You are

indeed unattached. All this is there, hidden somewhere in your existence. You have suppressed it.

Your inner capacity is so great that you can give up wealth, house, son, wife, parents, siblings, and even your body. You do not let your capacity be seen. What is in you is a pratibimba (reflection) of your essence. What you are is just a glimpse of your essence.

A large house once stood here, at Worli. When I came here in 1935 or '36, it stood alone and empty. I enquired about it, and was told that it belonged to someone who had left it and gone away, because there was a ghost in it. Look at that, now! Such a large house stood empty because people were afraid of the ghost. Narayana! You have the capacity to give up a house. Yes! When the wife gets involved with another man, the husband thinks about leaving her. It is his goodness if he doesn't leave her.

When a husband begins to go to someone else's house and drink heavily, the wife also thinks of leaving him. She may or may not be in a position to do so. A person has the capacity to leave his parents, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, wealth and body, etc. This capacity to detach yourself is within you. This is the basic power of Sanyas. It is a truth of the life of a human being.

A Pundit (learned person) does not mean a Sanyasi. Learning is fed into people. Pundits study and teach the Shastras. I know Pundits who have the Shastras by heart, but they tell lies for the sake of two rupees. How is learning related to Sanyas? A person does not become a Sanyasi in order to become a Pundit. He becomes a Sanyasi to give up his पाण्डित्य *paanditya* – the pride of being a learned person.

पाण्डित्यं निर्वेद्य बाल्येन तिष्ठसि। बाल्यं निर्वेद्य मौनेन तिष्ठसि। मौनम् च अमौनम् च निर्वेद्य अथ ब्राह्मणः
'*Paandityam nirve'dya baalye'na tishthaasi. Baalyam nirve'dya maune'na tishthaasi. Maunam cha amaunam cha nirve'dya atha braahmanah.*' Give up panditya. How should you stay? The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad uses the word, बाल्य *baalya* – have a childlike attitude. Shankaracharya's interpretation is, ज्ञान बल भावेन '*Gnaana-bala-bhaave'na.*' Narayana! His only बल *bala* (strength) is आत्म ज्ञान *aatmagnaan* – Gnan about the Atma. He has no माया *maayaa* (pretense), प्रकृति *prakriti* (fluctuating tendencies), पंचभूत *pancha bhoota* (five elements), सृष्टि *srishti* (Creation), no 'you' and no 'me'. The power in him is the absolute knowledge that his Atma is unattached and non-dual. It is the Brahman, and it is complete in itself. अबल्यो *Abalyo*! Worldly people think, 'I will be considered important when I achieve great things.' They feel, 'I will receive recognition when I make a great deal of money.' They think, 'A big car will give me a status in society.' They think, 'I will be respected when I acquire great learning.'

The Sanyasi Mahatma says, 'That is not the case. I have the Gnan of my Atma. सोवत बैठत पड़त उताने, कहे कबीर हम वहीं ठिकाने '*Sovata baithata padata utaane, kahe kabeera hama vaheen thikaane.*' Greatness is not measured by कर्म-भोग *karma-bhoga* (actions and indulgences), धन-सम्पदा *dhana-sampadaa* (money and riches), विद्या-बुद्धि *vidyaa-buddhi* (learning and intelligence). We have the strength of the power of the Atma. I have the

capacity to give up everything. I can turn away from everyone. I can live without anybody. My Self is the complete, indestructible, non-dual, unattached Brahman that is Sacchidananda (pure existence, consciousness and bliss).

The Brahman needs no other, to exist. He needs no other, to know himself. His happiness does not depend on any other factor. He has no desires, no worries, and no tension. The worldly people who cannot live without worldly indulgences think, 'You are just like us.' Narayana! The only strength of a Sanyasi is the Atmagnan he has.

What now? बाल्यं निर्वेद्य मौनेन तिष्ठसि 'Baalyam nirve`dya maune`na tishthaasi.' Now there is no need to be like a child. Become मौन *mauna* (silent). Become calm. Become free of all actions. The mental tendency of a Muni (Sage) is called 'mauna'. मननात् मुनिः 'Mananaat munih.' A Muni is always doing मनन *manana* (giving deep thought) about the Paramatma. He is mauna about the संसार *sansaara* (the interactive world). Mauna is not just not talking. Mauna is a tranquil mind. Samadhi does not mean mauna. The intellect should always be alert with regard to the Parabrahma Paramatma. मौनम् च अमौनम् च निर्वेद्य अथ ब्राह्मणः 'Maunam cha amaunam cha nirve`dya atha braahmanah.'

Now, mauna was obtained, and so was अमौन *amauna* (absence of mauna). Indifference for both was achieved. There is no attachment for Samadhi. If the state of Samadhi is achieved, fine; if Samadhi is over, fine! Isn't it? The manan and Samadhi are both states of mind. I am certainly not the mind! I am the immovable, unaffected witness. I am the conscious Atma that observes. I am the essence of the Turiya – the Brahman. I am not separated by space, time, and matter. I am the non-dual Brahman that is far from even the concept of space, time and matter.

Narayana! What is the meaning of Sanyas? Sanyas means that सुख *sukha* (happiness combined with comfort and contentment), that is beyond description. An indescribable sukha. यत्र अन्यः अन्यत् न पश्यति। अन्यः अन्यत् न शृणोति। अन्यः अन्यत् न विजानाति 'Yatra anyah anyat na pashyati. Anyah anyat na shrinoti. Anyah anyat na vijaanaati.' This is the description given in the Chandogya Upanishad. 'I do not become separate from my eye to see the forms. Then, what do I see? I see the Atma that is the instrument – the eye – that sees. I see the Atma that is seen. अहमेव। आत्मनैव। आत्मानं पश्यामि 'Ahame`va. Aatmanaiva. Aatmaanam pashyaami.' I, myself, see myself, through myself. करणं विनैव 'Karanam vinaiva.' I see without any karan (instrument or sense organ). विषयं विनैव 'Vishayam vinaiva,' I see myself without there being any विषय *vishay* (object of the senses). I am the द्रष्टा *drashtaa* (the one who sees) without having the subtle ego of being the one who sees. Nothing exists except me.

There is no karan. I do not see any as being separate. नान्यत् पश्यति। नान्यत् शृणोति। नान्यत् विजानाति। 'Naanyat pashyati. Nanyat shrinoti. Nanyat vijaanaati.' The non-dual Paramatma is the only truth. He is the ultimate reality. He is the only Satya. Only He exists.'

My brother, if you get trapped anywhere in this world, you will have to weep. This is the truth. You may be trapped in wealth, in a house, in your family, or some love affair. You may be trapped in your body or anywhere else. You will have to shed tears if you get trapped in worldly considerations. If you have already wept, it was because you were ensnared by something worldly. A person who is not trapped cannot cry. Bonds and tears are both due to your belief that you are attached to the world. आसक्ति *Aasakti* (attachment) means something you believe. Asakti does not exist. What did you have before your birth? What will you have after you die? Even this body of yours will not remain with you. This is the truth of the matter.

Look, this truth is not for the Sanyasis to know; it is for the Grihasthas to know. Don't say, 'Babaji, you are talking about the matters of the Babajis.' O people trapped in this world! This is for you to know! Where, when, and what you are trapped by is what will bind you and make you weep, there, and then. Your loved one will make you weep. This is something you should hear, something I should tell you.

I tell the people who are bound – 'fear not; this, too, will not remain.' Is that not so? What you have got trapped by is not given to you forever. Even your body will not last forever.

Look, tyaga is a truth of the life of every human being. The Vedas say, तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथाः । तेन त्यक्तेन-त्यागेन भावेन। 'Te`na tyakte`na bhunjeethaah. Tye`na tyakte`na tyaaage`na bhaave`na.' Enjoy it with the feeling that you will be giving it up. आत्मानं पालयेथाः 'Aatmaanam paalaye`thaah.' Protect you Self. Don't focus on looking after your house, wealth, or family. Don't get too involved in looking after your body. Protect your Atma. त्यागेनैकेअमृतत्वमानशु 'Tyaaage`naike` amritatvamaanashuh.' You can obtain the essence of amrita (the elixir of immortality) through tyaga. न्यासे-वाचरयेद् तत् न्यासमेषां तपसा मतिरिक्तमाहुः 'Nyaase`vaacharaye`d tat nyaasame`shaam tapasaa matiriktamaahuh.' न्यास *Nyaasa* (depositing) is the greatest thing in all the tapasya (asceticism) in the world. न्यासो दण्डस्य 'Nyaaso dandasya.' There is no need to punish any being. Punish yourself first.

One day, Jesus was going somewhere. He saw a crowd, and asked, 'Why has the crowd gathered?' 'A thief has been caught,' replied the man. 'He will be made to stand in the center, and people will pelt him with stones from all sides, till he dies. This is the way he will be killed. He will be stoned to death.'

'Very well,' said Jesus. 'A thief must be punished. However, in my opinion, let the first stone be thrown by the man who has never stolen anything in his life.' Yes! People throw stones at others. They see the smallest flaw in another, but don't see their own glaring faults.

What does Sanyas mean? Sanyas is to remain a mere witness to whatever others do. They may do this or that. They may live in this manner or that manner. They may come, or not come; go or not go. They may live or they may die; they may laugh or they may cry. A Sanyasi is not concerned with what happens in the world. He is an unattached

observer. He looks on, but does not relate to what happens in this world. He is just like the Brahman, who only watches all that is done by Prakriti (Nature).

Just as we see things in a dream, a Sanyasi sees the Self in all forms. It is his Self who is coming and going, loving and hating, crying and laughing. The Padre, Purohit and Dastur are all different. Their job is different. The fund of organized religion is different. Tattvagnan is something that is completely different. A Tattvagnani is neither a Hindu, nor a Muslim, nor a Christian, nor a Sikh. He is not a Parsi and he is not a Jew. He is not bound by any particular sect. Sanyas is a truth of life. Four pieces of wood do not burn at the same speed. This body, too, does not all get burnt in the same time. All of you know this.

हाड़ जले ज्यों लाकड़ी, केश जलें ज्यों घास।
सब जग जलता देखकर, भया कबीर उदास॥

*Haada jale`jyon laakadee, ke`sha jale`jyon ghaas,
Saba jaga jalataa de`khakara, bhayaa kabeera udaasa.*

(The bones burn like wood, the hair burns like grass. Seeing the whole world burning makes Kabeer sad.)

In this world, the one you are clutching on to will cause trouble for you. He will give you incalculable sorrow. My brother, loosen your hold a little, so that your hand is not broken when you leave. Yes! If you grip him tightly, your hand will be wrenched off when he leaves. His going is certain. Either you go, and he will be left behind; or else he goes, and you will be left behind. Going is certain. Remember – the one you love will bind you and make you weep.

You may believe this or not. You may know it, or not. The seed of Sanyas is present in your अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (subconscious mind) from the very beginning. When I say that the seed is present, it means that it is the essence of the Atma to give up everything, and be by itself. This seed is present in the form of a प्रतिबिम्ब *pratibimba* (reflection). If you help it to grow, it will help you to be happy. Yes! You may wear black, yellow, blue, green, or white clothes, but let the Sanyas in your antahkaran grow, and have a happy life.

I will tell you one thing. The causes of सुख-दुख *sukha-dukha* (happiness and sorrow) are all external. All the factors that bring happiness and sorrow are in the outer world. The cause may be your son or your daughter.

Some youngsters come to me, who create a lot of trouble for their parents. Some parents come to me, who really harass their son. One young lady who comes told me, ‘Maharaj, I am in love with a particular man. I have had intimate relationships with him, but my parents won’t allow me to marry him.’ This is what she said.

Daughters-in-law also tell me things. They tell me that they don’t trust their husband and mother-in-law. Parents also say the same. Look at the naked world. This is what the

Vedantis call निरावरण *niraavarana* (without a covering, naked). Just tear aside the curtain of this world and see.

Take a look within yourself, and see how deeply involved you are in this world. So, my brother, the things that bring you joy and sorrow are all factors that are absolutely external. They have no relationship with your inner world. The निमित्त *nimitta* (causative factors) are of many kinds. Some of them come from our प्रारब्ध *praarabdha* (fate created by past actions), and some come from current circumstances.

The fact remains that the mind experiences happiness at times and unhappiness at times. The sukha-dukha that are in the mind are संस्कार *sanskaara* (subtle mental impressions). The happiness and sorrow are perceived according to the individual's sanskara. My brother, happiness and sorrow come to the mind as guests. They are like the gangsters who walk on the roads. Just as gangsters walk on the roads, joy and sorrow come and go. Some happiness comes as a guest; then it goes away. What is there or us to remove? Tell me, now! What we have to remove is the अभिमान *abhimaana* (subtle ego) of being happy. This subtle ego of being happy or unhappy is caused by foolishness.

It is foolish when people see a big car on the road and feel elated with the thought, 'This is mine.' If someone sees a garbage truck on the road and feels unhappy, thinking, 'This is mine,' it is lack of proper understanding. We attach the world to ourselves and become happy or unhappy. This vanity (of believing ourselves to be happy or unhappy) is a total lack of understanding. It is a stupidity. The garbage truck that moves in this world – that is seen by us – is not ours. The luxurious automobile we see in this संसार *sansaara* (interactive world) is not ours either. Neither belongs to us. When you attach them to yourself, you become happy or unhappy.

The mind has no existence in the essence of the Atma. Then, tell me, where is the existence of the joy and sorrow of the mind in the Atma that is unattached, non-dual, indivisible, inseparable; the Atma that is Sacchidananda?

What is the real Sanyas? The real Sanyas is the bright, effulgence of inner vision. The real Sanyas is the outlook that no place, object, or individual is ours. The inner vision is like fire. Burn these three, for which you feel possessive, in the fire of the inner vision. No place, object or person belongs to you. Let it be absolutely clear in your mind, 'No plot of land belongs to me. No object belongs to me. Nobody in this world is mine.' Even my body belongs to me. Not even my mind is mine. This wicked mind does not obey my orders. This antahkaran does not belong to me, nor does the Samadhi it enters into. The wicked Samadhi is achieved sometimes and sometimes it eludes me. I have to summon it. I have to fold my hands and call it. I have to practice. I have to exercise.'

Leave all these hassles. My brother, this is the life of Sanyas that contains no possessiveness, no feeling of individuality, and no attachment to any. Look; you people are Grihasthas. People come to you, who flatter you to obtain some favor. They succeed in their selfish purpose. They fold their hands before you. Their praises build bridges by

which they gather wealth and advantages from you. These flatterers say, ‘My brother, you are truly noble! You are even greater than the Sanyasis. You are greatly superior. You are Godly! Oh! You are God Himself!’

Their flattery fills you with delight. You get intoxicated with vanity, and stay on the ground. You make no effort to understand the lofty level of a Sanyasi. You think that only fools take Sanyas. You consider Sanyasis to be people with misfortune.

‘They have no shop, business, or factory. They have neither a house nor a car. They have no servants. They are far lower in society than we are. They are unfortunate, poor, and helpless. Come, let us throw them some coins and make them happy.’

Just think a little; give the matter some thought. How much do you spend on the man who sweeps the floor in your house? How much do you spend on your barber? How much do you spend on the tailoring and cleaning of your clothes? Take a tally of your expenses. Do you spend the same amount of money for the Saints and Mahatmas, the Sadhus and Sanyasis, who have given up everything to safeguard Dharma? You think that Sanyasis are just like beggars. You think they will also be happy, and go away, if you toss them some coins, isn’t it?

Narayana! Sanyas is a Tattva. Sanyas is a way of life. It is a truth. The truth is that if there was no Sanyas, the system of Varnashram (organized states and levels in society) could not endure. Human life could not endure. In the end, we have to give up. The brahmachari has to give up the sacred thread, sacred tuft of hair and other signs of his status. The grihastha has to give up his household and business.

When someone dies, people take off his clothes and bathe his body. When they place it on the funeral pyre and burn it, it is as a Sanyasi. When they bury it, it is as a Sanyasi. When they immerse it in water, it is as a Sanyasi. The ultimate state of a human being is Sanyas.

Look, ultimately neither the Brahmacharya nor the Grihastha Ashram will remain. The Vanaprastha Ashram will not remain either. Everyone will ultimately have to leave in the same condition – the state called Sanyas. If you mentally accept this state of tyaga and Sanyas, your mind will become a Sanyasi. If you listen to those who flatter you, and begin to believe that you are a Mahatma in white clothes, far superior to the Sanyasi Mahatma, than I can only congratulate you on your intelligence! That is all. It is worth paying some attention to the level of our understanding. Be careful regarding the people who flatter you. You can tale it that they have come to ask you for something, and will get some advantage form you.

There is a Mahatma I know. By the Grace of God, he is still living. He is about eighty or eighty five years now. One day, this Mahatma was seated before a Seth and began to shower praises on him. The Mahatma said, ‘Sethji, you are a Mahapurush (great soul). You are a जीवनमुक्त *jeevanmukta* (liberated) Mahatma. There is no one who can compare with you.’

I asked the Mahatma whether he had become a disciple of the Seth. ‘Look,’ he replied, ‘the Seth doesn’t want to become my disciple. Had he been my disciple he would have given me gifts and monetary offerings. Since he does not become my disciple, I will become his disciple, and extract something out of him. You see, whether the sickle falls on the kashifal or whether the fruit falls on the sickle, it is the fruit that will be cut!’

Narayana! If anyone tells you that you are indeed a Mahatma in white clothes, don’t get mislead into believing him. Don’t allow flattery to give you a swollen head, but become alert. Take a peep into your own heart and face the truth.

This Sanyas is a life, it is a Vedic truth. It is a Satya (existence) that is described in the Upanishads. It is an experience of the essence. So, don’t say that Sanyas is a beggarly way of life. Don’t think it to be a misfortune. Sanyas is a great thing. If, while living in the Grihastha Ashram, you keep to the goal of giving up everything one day, your attachments will loosen. You will not suffer mental anguish when someone comes or goes, breaks or cracks, dies or is destroyed, joins you or leaves you. The day will come when we have to leave everything anyway.

May this quality of tyaga and Sanyas come into your lives as Grihasthas. May your lives be happy in every way. All right, enough for today. ॐ नमो नारायण *Om namo Narayana*. Be happy.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Tein Ya Haan

Useless Chatter Or Acceptance.

ॐ

विश्वं दर्पणदृश्यमाननगरीतुल्यं निजान्तर्गतं
पश्यन्नात्मनि मायया बहिरिवोद्भूतं यथा निद्रया
यः साक्षत्कुरुते प्रबोधसमये स्वात्मानमेवाद्वयं
तस्मै श्रीगुरुमूर्तये नम इदं श्रीदक्षिणामूर्तये ॥
माया छाया वराकी कथमिव लभतां मय्यनन्ते प्रतिष्ठा
मस्थाने चेश्वरत्वं द्रुहिणहरिहरा हन्त वह्नेः स्फुलिङ्गा ।
अद्वैते द्वैतखेला गगननलिनवत् स्वप्नवज्जीवमेला,
श्रीपूर्णानन्दवाणी श्रुतिशिखरसुधा स्वर्णदी नः पुनातु ॥

ॐ

Om

*Vishvam darpanadrishyamaananagareetulyam nijaantaragatam
Pashyannaatmani maayayaa bihirvodbhootam yathaa nidrayaa,
Yah saakshaatkurute`prabodhasamaye`svaatmaaname`vaadvayam
Tasmai shreegurumoortaye nama idam shreedakshinaamoortaye`.
Maayaa chaayaa varaakee kathamiva labhataam mayyanante`pratishthaamasthaane`
che`shvaratvam druhinahariharaa vanhe`h sfulingaah,
Advaite`dvaitakhe`laa gagananalinavat svapnavajjeevame`laa
Shrerpoornaanandavaanee shrutishikharasudhaa svarnadee nah punaatu.*

Om.

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

The Vedantis say that this interactive world is Maya (the Lord's power of delusion). In Sanskrit, the word माया *maayaa* means दम्भ *dambha* – hypocrisy. माया दम्भे कृपायां च 'Maayaadambhe`kripaayaam cha.' Yes! In the Sanskrit dictionary the word 'maya' is described as dambha – pretense. This interactive world is Maya. That means that all our worldly interaction contains a degree of artificiality.

The greatest pretense is the Ishwara, because He is the Master of Maya. He is also the Maya. He shows us the things that have no existence in Him. Death is not at all present in the essence of the Ishwara. There is no अज्ञान *agnaana* (lack of Gnan) in Him; nor does sorrow exist in Him. In the Ishwara, nothing is fragmented, nothing is separate. The Ishwara is fully aware that His essence contains no death, ignorance, sorrow, or

separation. He shows us these things in Himself, even though they are not there. This is called pretense, dambha!

What is this world? It is a grand exhibition of the pretense of the Ishwara. Now you should, each of you, understand your own Maya for yourselves. How much of pretense is there in your behavior to your friend? You know very well that you are doing Maya with people! There is a great act of pretense that is going on. Understand your dambha. You are अदम्भ *adambha* (free of pretense), but you have adopted pretense in your interaction with others. To know your hypocrisy, and to detach yourself from it is called 'Sanyas.'

All right, listen to some more meanings. Sanyas means – दण्डन्यास *dandanyaasa* towards all beings. 'Today onwards, I will not punish anyone, no matter what they do.' This oath is the main oath in the life of a Sanyasi. This is called अभय दान '*abhaya daana*' (the gift of fearlessness). Abhay daan is the greatest charity in the world. Actually, the meaning of Sanyas is to give abhay to all beings.

Narayana! I will now tell you something about the four rituals in Sanyas. These actions are not easily grasped by just reading books. They are not even found easily in books. The first action in Sanyas is सर्वप्रायश्चित्त *sarvapraayashchitta* – repentance for every wrong action. All the wrong thoughts that have entered the mind since ages past, and all the wrong actions that have been done, all the sins, need to be repented. This prayashchitta is the first action when a person takes the vows of renunciation. To repent for the sins of countless past lives is called 'sarvaprashchitta'. It is difficult to know all the various wrongs and sins of the past. However, by the Grace of God, the Shastras have a method by which they can be calculated. This type of sin, that kind of sin, etc. This is called the Himadri resolve. The Pundits speak these out aloud, and make us do the prayashchitta.

Now, if you ask what the prayashchitta is, my brother, the दान *daan* (charity) that is greater than the daan of the whole world is गोदान '*godaan*' – the gift of a cow.

Once, some fishermen caught Chyavan Rishi in their fishing net. It was the law of the land that at the end of each day, the King would buy all the goods that remained unsold. Chyavan Rishi told the fishermen, 'I have been caught in your net, so I have become your fish. You should sell me.' The fishermen took the Rishi to the King to sell.

'Maharaj,' said the King, 'what price should be paid for you?'

'Rajan,' replied Chyavan Rishi, 'the daan should equal my worth.'

'Take a hundred gold sovereigns,' said the King.

'No,' said the Rishi.

'Take a thousand gold sovereigns,' offered the King.

'No,' said the Rishi.

‘Take a hundred thousand gold sovereigns!’ The Rishi did not accept. The King offered half his Kingdom, but even that was not accepted by the Rishi. Then the King offered his entire Kingdom, to no avail.

‘Take half the earth,’ he offered, but the Rishi did not agree.

‘Maharaj’, said the King piteously, ‘I respectfully and humbly place the whole world at your divine feet. Please Grace me by accepting it.’

‘Rajan,’ said Chyavan Rishi, ‘Not even a million universes can be equal to me. I am the Parabrahma Paramatma incarnate. The daan should be equal to me.’

‘Maharaj, what daan can equal you?’ asked the King. Chyavan Rishi answered kindly, ‘Rajan, give a cow to these fishermen. Godaan will be equal to my worth.’

Narayana! This godaan has been considered to be equal to the daan of this earth. When we take Sanyas, we do godaan as atonement for all past sins. If there is no cow, we do godaan with even five rupees. We even do it with a rupee and a quarter! So, my brother, the first action in Sanyas is sarvaprashchitta. You can understand the meaning of prayashchitta. A solemn pledge accompanies the prayashchitta, to never sin again. If a person sins again, it is just like, प्रायश्चित्तगतो पार्थम् मन्ये कुंजर-शौचवत् ‘*praayashchittagato paartam manye` kunjarashauchavat.*’ (To sin after prayashchitta is like an elephant’s bath, because he sprays mud on himself after bathing.)

The second action in Sanyas is to be free of the rin (being indebted) of ancestors. A man cannot do the श्रद्धा *shraaddha* (offer oblations) to his ancestors once he becomes a Sanyasi. So he must repay his debt to them before he takes the vows of renunciation. When ancestors are pleased, the future generations continue to uphold the Dharma and good name of the lineage. It is essential that the ancestors are pleased. If they are not pleased, the lineage does not continue, and their culture is destroyed. Therefore, the second action of a Sanyasi is to do the shraddha of his ancestors, until he does आत्मश्रद्धपर्यन्त *aatmashraaddha* (his own shraddha).

A Sanyasi’s third action is to be free of the debt of the Devtas. We are greatly indebted to the Devtas. We take light from Surya Devta. We breathe in the air. We draw water from wells to drink, without making any payment. We live on the earth, and walk on the earth. The sun and the moon send us no bills. Is it not a fact?

In cities we have to pay for using the fan and the light. We also have to pay for the water from the taps, and we have to pay for the land. This world sends us bills for everything, but we use all that belongs to Bhagwan without paying anything. We are unable to repay the debt of the Devtas even though we spend millions on cigarettes that pollute the air. Isn’t it so? Well, we also pollute the air with petrol fumes and the smoke from mills and factories. We pollute the whole environment. We pour toxics into the rivers and lakes. We sully the Devtas, but do not repay our debt to them.

All of us are indebted to the Devtas. Before becoming a Sanyasi, we have to be free of our debt to the Devtas. That is called विरजा होम '*viraja homa*'. Most people won't know about this, that is why I am telling you about it.

Very well, now, look – the first action is Sanyas is to be free of all sin though the ritual of sarva prayashchitta. The second action is to be free of the debt of ancestors by doing their shraddha. The third action is the Viraja Homa that frees us of the debt of the Devtas. The fourth action in Sanyas is सर्वत्याग *sarvatyaaga*. That means, 'I am not this body, and nothing in this world belongs to me.'

I am telling you something that is not easily understood by worldly people. Does the diamond belong to you, or to the Ishwara? Is the gold yours, or is it the Ishwara's? Is the food Ishwara's, or is it yours? Well, my brother – tell me! You say, 'Mine! Mine! Mine,' till your dying breath. You may call your Master's property yours, but do so the way a clerk does. You are the manager of your boss' property, but all the wealth actually belongs to Raghupati – सम्पत्ति सब रघुपति की आहीं *Sampatti saba raghupati kee aaheen*.

A Seth (businessman) made a big loss. He was several millions in debt. He was extremely worried because he could see no solution to his problem. Seeing him so worried, his clerk said, 'Master, please don't be so worried. Place the burden of your worries on me, and be free of all tension.'

The clerk consulted a lawyer. 'I will charge a fee of one lakh rupees,' said the lawyer, 'but I will definitely win the case. Sethji will have to do only one thing. He will have to stand in the witness box and say, 'Tein'. Leave everything else to me.'

The clerk agreed to all the conditions, and told the lawyer that his fees would be paid after the case was won. The Seth stood in the witness box and said, 'Tein', once. The lawyer established to the Court that the Seth was of unsound mind. 'Your Honor, he says nothing except 'tein'. He has written the contracts and signed them when he was not in his senses. He has gone mad. Please let him go.'

The Seth was set free. The lawyer won the case, and the Seth was absolved from paying his debts worth millions of rupees. A few months passed by. The lawyer kept waiting for the clerk to come and pay his fees. Ultimately, he went to the clerk and said, 'My brother, please pay me my fee of one lakh that is due to me.'

'Tein,' said the clerk.

'Oh! It was I who taught you that trick, and you are playing the same trick on me?'

'Look, Mr. Lawyer,' said the clerk. 'Can't the 'tein' that saved me from a massive debt of several millions save me from a little debt of one lakh?'

So, my brother, one thing is to say, 'tein' for the world. This is for the जिज्ञासु *jigyaasu* (spiritual seeker). It is one thing to say 'Yes'. Say yes to the right and left, above and below. Say yes to coming and going, to life and to death. Say yes to everything. Only

the अवद्यूत संत *avadhoota santa* (the Saints who have no possessions) can say yes to whatever the Ishwara ordains.

There are Saints of the अवद्यूत कोटि *avadhoota koti* (the status of wandering Monks who have nothing), and there are Saints of the ईश्वर कोटि *Ishwara koti* (those who have grandeur like the Ishwara).

Well, now, are the people who exhibit their importance through Mutts-Ashrams, wealth, learning, disciples and followers also Saints? Sitaram! Their saintliness is suspect. Their Sainthood is bestowed; it is a superimposition. Therefore, their Sainthood can be negated. Tell me, what does a real Saint have to do with all these external objects he is burdened with? A true Saint is unattached to, and unaffected by these external factors. He is just happy within his Self. He has no bonds of friendship or enmity. He has no attachment for any situation or circumstance. He is unattached to any object or individual. He feels no possessiveness for any place, person or thing. In the eyes of a real Saint, everything is the Paramatma. The Paramatma abides in all, and all are in Him. Nothing exists, except the Paramatma. For the true Saint there is no sansara – it is all the Paramatma.

Meeting people is like meeting them in a dream. The world becomes a dream-like perception. A true Saint has the same experience as Shankar Bhagwan, उमा कहँ मैं अनुभव अपना, सत् हरि भजन जगत् सब सपना '*Umaa kahahaun mein anubhava apanaa, sat hari bhajana jagata saba sapanaa*.' (Uma, I am telling you my experience. This world is a dream. The only reality is to do bhajan of Hari.)

A real Saint will speak like Guru Vasishtha, दीर्घ स्वप्नमिमं विद्धि दीर्घं चित्त्विभ्रमम्। दीर्घं वा मनोराज्यं हे रघुनन्दन '*Deergham svapnamimam viddhi deergham chittavibhramam. Deergham vaa manoraajyam he` raghunandana*.' (Know this world to be like a dream seen when you are fast asleep. You mind gets deluded and you imagine things, O son of Raghu.)

A Sadhu once told me, 'I have one lakh disciples.' I thought to myself, 'He is the leader of a lakh of fools.' Narayana! Having many disciples does not make anybody a Saint. Having many Mutts or Ashrams does not make anybody a Saint. What has learning to do with saintliness? A person does not become a Saint simply because he preaches, or his name is printed in the papers.

Who is a Saint? A person who becomes one with the सन्मात्र-चिन्मात्र-आनन्दमात्र *sanmaatra-chinmaatra-anandmaatra* (pristine existence, consciousness and bliss) Brahman, and spends his life in a state of joy, is called a Saint.

Very well, look – you can either deny everything by saying 'tein', or you can accept everything by saying 'yes'. You can't remain in-between. You cannot continue to accept possessions and attachments. You have to select one path. You can choose the path of denial or the path of acceptance. Tein, or yes! Don't swing on the swing that goes to both turn by turn. Either say, नेति-नेति '*ne`ti-ne`ti*' ('not this, not this, denying the

reality of this world), or say, ओम-ओम ‘*Om - Om*’ (accept everything as the Brahman).
You must make a clear-cut decision – tein, or yes!

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Ishwara Vishwas

Faith in the Ishwara

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

My father did the पूजा *poojaa* (ritual worship) of Shankarji every day. During the lunar month of Shravan, he used ten million bel leaves for the puja. The पार्थिव-लिंग *Parthiva linga* (clay image) would be worshipped. Then, the आरती *aarati* (worship with a lamp) would be done. I would run and go there as soon as I heard the ringing of the arti bells. Do you know why? Because, that was when प्रसाद *prassaada* (food sanctified by offering to the Lord) was distributed. I was a ‘prasad bhakta’ (devotee who comes only for Prasad), you know!

All right, look; it was at the time of the pealing of the arti bells and distribution of the prasad of jaggery and rice that श्रद्धा *shraddhaa* (faith) in the Ishwara awoke in my heart.

I began to do the puja of Shankarji when I was seven. I also started to recite the Durga Saptashati at that age. My father passed away when I was seven. I did not see how he passed away, but people told me that he was taken to the Gangaji in a palanquin, and placed on the bank with his head towards the Gangaji. When the fire was started on his funeral pyre, his head cracked open and a lump of flesh flew out and fell into the Gangaji.

After my father passed way, my mother used to recite passages from the Ramcharitmanas. I did not know how to read. My mother would point out the letters in the verses, and tell me, ‘This is m, this is g, this is bha,’ etc. Thus, my mother gifted me the Gnan of letters through the Ramcharitmanas. This was how I learnt to read मंगल भवन अमंगलहारी। द्रवहुँ सु दशरथ अजिरबिहारी ‘*Mangalabhavana amangalakaaree, dravahu su dasharatha ajirabihaaree.*’ This is also a sanskaara (subtle subconscious impression) given by my parents.

I did not know how to write either. I went to school and learnt how to write. A number of dogs sat on the road to my school. I told my grandfather, ‘Baba, there are many dogs sitting on the road when I go to school. I feel afraid of them.’ My grandfather told me lovingly, ‘Look, Bachva, don’t look at the dogs that are sleeping curled up. Take the name of Bhagwan and pass by them.’ I did as he said. At that time, a strong faith in the name of the Lord arose in my heart. No dog has ever bitten me.

The feeling in my village is to consider the boys born in our family to be their Guru. The villagers call us ‘Babaji’. Every boy born in our lineage becomes Babaji. My grandfather was Babaji, I am Babaji, and Vishwambhar is Babaji. So are his sons. There – in my village – we are all called ‘Babaji’.

After my father passed away, his disciples used to come to me. They would wash my feet, and take back the water. They believed me to be the Ishwara incarnate, and that the

water that touched my feet would cure any illness in their family. In those days, there were very few doctors. There was no doctor in the vicinity of my village. One came and settled nine miles from my village when I was twenty! Narayana! What I learnt from these disciples of my father was the absolute faith we should have in the Ishwara and in our elders. Truly, the elders are to be revered and loved as the Ishwara.

An enlightened Saint, Paramhansa Jagannathpuri Maharaj came frequently to our house. Every time I saw him, I would have the thought, 'If I ever become a Sadhu, I will become a Sanyasi. I will never become a Vaishnav Sadhu.' You see, Sadhus came regularly to our house. Arrangements for their food and दक्षिणा *dakshinaa* (monetary gift) were made. When Vaishnav Sadhus came, special arrangements were made for them to cook their own food. They would take uncooked rice, vegetables, etc from my mother, and cook the food themselves. They would offer it to Bhagwan and then eat it as prasad. When the Sanyasi Sadhus came, they were made to sit on a चौकी *chauki* (low stool), and cooked food was served to them. They would eat and go on their way.

I watched the Sadhus and listened to them attentively. Seeing them strengthened my resolve to be a Sanyasi Sadhu. 'I will get cooked food. I won't need to spend time in cooking. I'll never be a Vaishnav Sadhu.' I did not want the complication of cooking, etc. I preferred to take the cooked rotis on my hand and go on my way.

To be a Sanyasi is to lead a life that is completely dependent on the Ishwara. A Sanyasi surrenders his life totally to the Ishwara. He will live if the Ishwara keeps him alive; he will eat if the Ishwara provides food. Yes! The Shastras define Sanyas as an individual's absolute surrender to the Ishwara.

No matter which kind of ritual is done when a man accepts Sanyas, at the end the Sanyasi has to make this pledge, 'O Lord, I surrender completely to You. You are my only refuge. I have none other but You. You alone are my all-in-all. Nobody else is mine. My brain is not working. All my plans and considerations are useless. O Lord, please do whatever You please with me. I accept Your decisions without demur. Whatever You choose has my full consent.'

Sanyas doesn't mean that you don saffron robes, or cut off your चोटी *choti* (sacred tuft of hair), or remove your यज्ञोपवीत *yagyopaveeta* (sacred thread). Look, the Sanyas Ashram is different from living the life of a Sanyasi. The Sanyas Ashram is an arrangement of Dharma, and has its own rules and regulations. The life of a Sanyasi means that we leave ourselves completely in the hands of the Ishwara, with full faith in Him alone. The life of a Sanyasi is a life that is totally surrendered to the Ishwara.

Narayana! Once, I was alone and on the verge of drowning in the Gangaji. Someone came from behind and caught my neck. He pulled me out of the water and laid me on the bank. On one occasion, I could find no place to sit and rest, or sleep. Someone called me, made me sit and made room for me to sleep. There was a time when I had no food or water. I was preparing to try to sleep despite my hunger and thirst. Bhagwan Himself

came and gave me food and water. He fed me and made me sleep. Bhagwan Himself arranges to provide us with what we need. He sends us what we need, and safeguards what we have.

I did an अनुष्ठान *anushthaana* (a specific ritual for a specific purpose) of the Gayatri Mantra. I chanted Shri Krishna's Mantra. The descriptions given in the Shastras about the direct personal experience of the Ishtadev (chosen form of worship) are absolutely accurate. We can see our Ishtadev with these very eyes. There is no reason to doubt this. Even today, Bhagwan manifests, and gives His दर्शन *darshan* (vision). Even today, Bhagwan protects us. Don't doubt these things; do the saadhanaa (effort for spiritual progress) as directed by your Guru.

You are all familiar with this – I have often spoken about it to you. All the astrologers consulted were unanimous in predicting that my life would end when I was nineteen. I began to visit Mahatmas. I took the refuge of Saints. By the Grace of God, I met Sants who had no trace of fraud or deceit. They were neither hypocrites, nor charlatans. They did not believe in demonstrating supernatural powers and miracles. The Sants I met were pristine men of God. Actually, राम कृपा करि चितवहिं जाहीं, संत विशुद्ध मिलावहिं ताहीं '*Raama kripaa kari chitavahin jaaheen, santa vishuddha milaavahin taaheen.*' (When Shri Rama looks at someone with Grace, he meets genuine Saints.) These pure Sants said to me, 'Look, child, we cannot push away your death, but we can remove the fear of death from your heart.' They gave me the certainty that, ईश्वर अंश जीव अविनाशी, चेतन अमल सहज सुख रासी '*Eeshvara ansha jeeva avinaashee, che'tana amala sahaja sukha raasee.*' (The Atma in the individual is a part of the Paramatma. The Consciousness is unsullied, and is the essence of bliss.)

I was reading, न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचित् '*Na jaayate` mriyate` vaa kadaachit`*' (The Atma is not born, nor does it die).

'My child, what are you reading?' asked the Mahatma.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचित् '*Na jaayate` mriyate` vaa kadaachit,*' I replied.

'What does it mean?'

'There is no birth and no death.'

'Who has no birth and no death?' he asked.

'The Atma has no birth and no death,' I answered. 'The Paramatma is neither born nor does He die.'

The Mahatma looked lovingly at me and explained his heartfelt conviction. 'Son, this is not the description of any other Atma-Paramatma. It is a description of you! You are not this body. You are not your senses. You are not the breath of life. You are not the mind, intellect, fluctuating thoughts, or an individual. You are not the अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (subtle body). You are not an illusion of the antahkaran. You are the eternal, pristine, enlightened, liberated Atma. You are the Sacchidananda Atma that is unattached and non-dual. You are the experience of the Parabrahma Paramatma incarnate. You are not

born and you do not die. You are the अपरिच्छिन्न *aprichhinna* (indivisible) परिपूर्ण *paripoorna* (complete) Brahman.'

By the infinite Grace of the Saints and their inexhaustible benevolence, love, and blessings, the fear of death was removed from my mind. Not only that, death itself was removed. The astrologers continued with their calculations. They went on examining my birth chart. Yes! I crossed my nineteenth year. I crossed my thirty sixth year, my fifty sixth year and my sixty fifth year. I have crossed seventy five and am still alive. I am seated before you. My brother, when the Ishwara's Grace is being showered on someone, what affect will the stars have?

What all can I tell you? I have seen death with these very eyes of mine. I have seen what death is like. I have also seen how Hanumanji drives death away with his mace. Look; if there is anything worth learning from the life of a Sanyasi, it is this – a real faith in the Ishwara, and a life that is totally surrendered to Him.

Have faith in the Ishwara. Maintain the feeling that you are offering all your work and actions up to Him. If your faith in the Ishwara is authentic, if you offer your work up to Him in all sincerity, and lead a life that is surrendered to Him completely, then you can be like a Sanyasi even if you lead the life of a Grihastha.

This is extremely difficult; it is not easy! If achieved, you can be a Grihastha who is superior to a Sanyasi. Offer up all your actions to the Ishwara. When you sit for a meal, think, 'Can I offer this item to Bhagwan or not?' If you get the thought that it is not suitable to offer the Lord, you should not eat it either. If it is suitable, offer it with love, and enjoy it as His Prasad. You will see that this habit of offering up everything to the Ishwara will turn your life into the life of a Sanyasi. Your life will be offered up to Him.

All right, come; I will now tell you something of great value. Please pay attention to this valuable point and place it in your heart. It is of great utility for your आध्यात्मिक *aadhyaatmik* (metaphysical) life. Look; if you want to do something, first ask yourself, 'How will my mother feel when she hears about it? How will my father feel when he hears about it? How will my Guruji feel when he hears about it?' Oh, the Ishwara sees all that happens, doesn't He? तौ देखत अवगुण करूँ, तौको कैसे भाऊँ ? 'Tau de`khata avaguna karoon tauke`kaise`bhaaun?' (If You see me do wrong things, how can You like me?)

When we do things that are wrong, the Ishwara shuts His eyes. He remains with us, but keeps His eyes shut. He does not wish to see our faults. If the Ishwara were to see our faults and punish us accordingly, there would be no end to it. Whenever you do something, think, 'The Ishwara is watching me. What will He think of my action?' Just this thought will save you from many wrongs.

You are a believer. You have faith in the Ishwara. Just be aware that He is watching you. Narayana! This awareness will achieve more than listening to hundreds of discourses, reading hundreds of books and making hundreds of resolves. 'The Ishwara is watching me. Will He approve of my action?' This thought is enough! Sitaram! Just

keep in mind that the Ishwara sees all that you do. This will save you from many wrong actions. Isn't this something very useful? It is something invaluable for your spiritual progress.

I have not served the Sants; I have received their love. I would lie with my head on Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj's stomach and roll blissfully. This was fifty years ago. In 1944-45 I became very ill at Karnavas. I had acute diarrhea. I lay helpless on a bed. A hole was made, so that the excreta would fall into the bucket below. Babu Ramsahayji cradled my head on his lap. Once in a while he would ask how I was feeling. I would say, 'Babuji, everything is the Brahman.' Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj stood by me all night long. He would walk around my bed. Once in a while he would say, 'My diamond!' He thought that I was unconscious and unable to hear him. He would place his head lovingly on my head and say, 'My diamond!' He did not leave my side the whole night. Only at four in the morning, when he saw that I was recovering, did he go for Satsang (giving a discourse).

What am I to tell you? I have seen Bhagwan with these very eyes. With this very intellect, I have had the direct experience of the meaning of the Upanishads. I was told by the Upanishads themselves, 'You no longer need us.' Hence, निरसने निर्विघ्नः '*Nirasane nirvighnah*.' The Upanishads negated everything except the Paramatma, and gave up their own lives. The Upanishads told me that I am the ageless, eternal, Parabrahma Paramatma incarnate, and negated themselves. 'You remain,' they said. 'We are nothing. Now we will not remain.'

'O Lord, You live; let me die.'

You see, the fruit of Satsang is not that we are saved from disease or death; separation or sorrow. The fruit of Satsang is that we obtain the direct experience of the Atma. Our essence is the non-attached, non-dual, indivisible Parabrahma Paramatma who is Sacchidananda. The bliss of our essence is infinite and divine. सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म। '*Satyam gnaanamantam brahm*.' (The Brahman is infinite existence, consciousness and bliss.) विज्ञानम् आनन्दं ब्रह्म '*Vignaanam anantam brahm*' (The Brahman is consciousness and bliss.)

This is the all-in-all of our life.

I had matured considerably even before I went to the Gita Press. The atmosphere there was quite different. They spoke about Vedanta, but had no real interest in it. They were not in the least bit drawn to the wonderful Gnan of the Advaita (non-dual) Vedanta. Jaydayalji Goenka certainly had some interest and understanding of it, but Hanumanprasadji Poddar had no inclination whatsoever. I stayed among these people for many years, speaking on Vedanta every day.

One day, a bhakta caught hold of my hand and took me aside. 'Swamiji,' he said, 'Naradji meets me. Shankaracharya bows down to Naradji. Naradji has told me that Advaita Vedanta is not a basic principle.'

‘Look, Bhagatji,’ I replied. ‘It is true that Naradji meets you and that Shankaracharyaji bows down to Naradji. I do not speak about the principle of Advaita Vedanta because it is written in the Upanishads. I speak from personal experience. I have had a direct experience of the existence of the non-dual Brahman. I can see, with these very eyes, the Satya (ultimate truth) described in the Shrutis (Vedic verses). This is why I speak about it. Your Naradji, your Shankaracharyaji, and you, yourself, are my स्वप्नपुरुष *svapnapurusha* (men seen in a dream; things that are an illusion on the substratum).’ The bhakta folded his hands and said, ‘Enough, Maharaj, enough! I have nothing further to say to you.’

Narayana! Don’t allow the past or the future to occupy your mind. Remain in the present moment. This is a way of life, you see. Don’t waste time wondering about what wrongs you did and what good deeds you did. Don’t worry about whether you will get food in future or not. Who provides food? The one who connected our stomach to our mother’s stomach when we were in the womb, is the giver of food. The one who made breasts in our mother’s body, and filled them with milk as soon as we were born, is the one who provides for us. We live because He keeps us alive. We eat because He enables us to eat. We sit because He enables us to sit. We sleep thanks to Him, laugh thanks to Him, and weep thanks to Him.

His pure and sweet hand is behind all the actions and events in our life. The good qualities and faults that we see are basically due to our attachments and aversions. We get attached to what we like, and see good qualities in those we get attached to. We see faults in those we dislike.

Good and bad qualities do not lie in the objects; they are perceived as good or bad, depending on the राग-द्वेष *raaga-dve'sha* (attachments and aversions) that are in the antahkaran. There is no attachment or aversion in the one Parabrahma Paramatma. There are no qualities – good or bad – in Him, no Gnan or अज्ञान *agnaana* (lack of Gnan), no joy or sorrow. These are all matters of worldly interaction. These attachments and aversions, good and bad qualities, knowledge and ignorance, joy and sorrow, etc do not exist in the Paramatma.

The Paramatma is Sacchidanandagnan. He is the essence of existence, consciousness and bliss. Look; the Ganga of Gnan is flowing. The ocean of bliss is heaving, bliss is showering upon you, and sprays of elixir drench you. Just see them! See them with your eyes open and see them with your eyes shut. A Mahatma is one who has gained victory over death. त्वमेव विदित्वा अतिमृत्युमेति नान्यः पन्थाः विद्यतेऽनाय *‘Tvame`va viditvaa atimrityume`ti naanyah panthaah vidyate`naaya.’* We surmount death as soon as we obtain Gnan about the Paramatma. Like Dhruv, a Mahatma places his foot on death’s head, and rises above it. He is liberated, and becomes one with the Paramatma. Therefore, all talk about birth and death is futile. Talk about the Paramatma, and make you life fruitful.

Once, when I was living at the Gita Press, I went to meet Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj. He asked me, 'My child, how are things there?'

'Everything is very good,' I replied. 'Jaydayalji Goenka and Hanumanprasadji Poddar are both very good. I am satisfied to be there.'

After asking about things, Baba said, 'Listen to a story. There was a fakir (wandering Monk) who wandered from village to village. He would beg for his food and remain happy and carefree always. अलमस्त फकीरा रहम अल्लाह '*Alamasta fakeeraa rahama allaaha.*' (By the Grace of God, a fakir is always happy and carefree.) The fakir would say, 'Is there a grave anywhere?' Muslims and Christians are buried in a grave when they die. The fakir would ask, 'Is a grave available?' Nobody could understand what he meant.

There was a Grihastha who understood what the fakir meant. He was a ज्ञानी *gnaani* (having Gnan). Gnan has no aversion for the Grihastha Ashram. Rama, Krishna, Janak, Yagyavalkya, Ashvapati, Vyas, Parasara, Vasishtha and Shakti were all married Acharyas (Teachers) of the Gnan sampradaya. They were founders of schools of thought based on Gnan. Gnan is not the prerogative of any particular Ashram! However! The Grihastha was wise. He asked the fakir, 'Is there a corpse anywhere?'

The fakir tapped his chest and said, 'This is a corpse.' The Grihastha pointed towards his house and said, 'This is a grave.' The 'corpse' began to live in the 'grave'. He lived in a secluded room in a part of the house. He had no interaction with anybody. He had no friends and no foes. The Grihastha would place food at the fakir's door, and the fakir would silently accept the meals served to him. Thus, days passed gradually. Twelve years went by. During this period, the Seth's daughter had grown up. Preparations were made for her wedding. A number of guests came to the house. The wedding took place with great pomp. The wedding guests were given a loving send off after the wedding.

Now, Maharaj, some thieves entered the Seth's house at midnight. They took away all the jewelry, rich garments and other valuable items. The fakir saw them as they were leaving the house. He thought to himself, 'I have lived here for twelve years. The Seth has served me faithfully. He has fed me with great love. I ought to repay his goodness in his hour of need.'

With this in mind, he quietly followed the thieves. There was dense darkness all around. Absolute silence reigned. The thieves walked on steadily. When they were a long way away, they buried the loot under a huge tree. The fakir saw everything. He waited till they had gone away, then he quickly returned to the Seth's house. He tore off shreds from his loin cloth and tied them to the trees to mark the route. Then he reached his secluded room in the Seth's house.

The following morning, the Seth went as usual to the fakir's door, to bow down, and place the items for the morning routine on his doorstep. The fakir opened the door and asked the Seth to come in. He invited the Seth to sit on a mat, and narrated the events of

the night in detail. As advised by the fakir, the Seth called the police, and all the stolen goods were recovered.

Nine or ten days passed. The Grihasta went to the fakir with his dinner one day. He waited till the fakir finished eating. Then he asked, 'Maharaj, a question has been coming to my mind the past few days. With your permission I would like to respectfully place it before you.'

'Yes, certainly,' said the fakir. 'Ask whatever you want without hesitation.'

'Maharaj, is the 'grave' real, or is the 'corpse' real?'

'The 'grave' is absolutely real,' replied the fakir. 'The 'corpse' is false.' The Grihasta bowed down reverently and went to his rooms. The same night, the fakir left the house in the early hours of the night and disappeared forever.'

When Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj told me this story I was convinced that Baba was indicating that the 'grave' of the Gita Press was absolutely real, but that I was not yet a 'corpse'. This was a clear message for me. After that, I asked Shri Udiyababaji Maharaj if he would initiate me into Sanyas. I prayed to him to acquiesce. He told me to take Sanyas from Swami Shri Brahmanand Saraswati. Swami Brahmanand Saraswati had great renown at that time. Swami Karpatriji Maharaj had taken Sanyas from him. I used to visit him sometimes. He would sit without moving in one आसन *aasana* (Yogic posture) for twelve hours at a stretch.

Come, I will tell you something else. No matter how bad your physical pain may be, remain absolutely still. Don't move. Don't even blink. You can keep your eyes shut. If your body is not allowed to move, you will not be conscious of pain.

All right, look; keep your eyes focused on one point. Don't let the pupils move. You will not be conscious of pain. The pupils should move neither to the left nor to the right; neither up nor down. They should remain fixed and unmoving. Don't apply pressure to keep them still. As long as your eyes continue to remain fixed in one place, you will not be conscious of pain.

Narayana! Listen to one more method. Keep your tongue suspended in the cave of your mouth. You will not be conscious of pain. Your lips should be closed, but your upper teeth should not touch the lower. The tongue should not touch the base of your mouth, nor should it touch the roof. It should be suspended midway. You will not be conscious of pain as long as the tongue is suspended this way.

Yes! To keep the body absolutely still, the eyes unmoving, and the tongue suspended, are some practical methods that can subdue pain and discomfort. If you like, you can try them out here and now, and obtain relief from your aches and pains.

Everything is the Grace of Bhagwan. Everything is the Paramartha (supreme). Everything is रस *rasa* (sweetness), सुख *sukha* (happiness) and जीवन *jeevan* (life). Narayana! There is no place for delusion here. This is not the place for being angry or greedy. There is no scope for fear. Everything is the form of the Parameshwara. Nothing exists, except the Parameshwara.

What is the meaning of Parameshwara? As long as we do not know our Atma, it is called the Ishwara. When we come to know the Ishwara, He is called the Atma. The unknown Atma is called the Ishwara, and the Ishwara who is known is called the Atma. The object is one and the same; they are not two separate objects. To obtain such a life you will have to cultivate a childlike trust. Your faith in the Ishwara should be free of calculations or considerations.

When I was a child, I would tell my Baba, ‘Baba, clouds are gathering. It looks like rain. How will I go to school?’ Baba told me a mantra. ‘Chant this mantra, and clap your hands. And run off skipping and jumping on your way to school,’ he said. ‘Rain will not fall on you.’ At that age, I had implicit faith in whatever my grandfather said. I would chant the mantra and clap my hands, and run off happily. I don’t think that a single drop of rain fell on me at that time. Narayana! This is the kind of simple faith we must have in the Ishwara.

Faith cannot be cultivated through thinking and reasoning. You want to keep the world clutched in your fist and also have faith in the Ishwara at the same time? My brother, that cannot be done. As long as Draupadi held on to her sari with her hands, Bhagwan Shri Krishna looked on silently. When she lifted up both hands in utter helplessness, and called out desperately to Shri Krishna, He took on the form of her sari and wrapped Himself round her. Shri Krishna became a sari that had no end. This is Shri Krishna’s Avatar as a garment – it is His वस्त्रावतार *vastraavataara*! It has neither a beginning nor an end. This is the kind of faith in the Ishwara that we must have. मैं तो गिरिधर हाथ बिकानी, होनी होय से होय ‘*Main to giridhara haatha bikaani, honee hoya so hoyo.*’ (Meera says, ‘I am sold to Giridhar. Now let Him do what He wants with me.) Our lives should be filled with the kind of complete faith in the Ishwara that we had for our parents and elders when we were little children.

I had read about, and learnt, many such mantras that could protect the hand from being burnt in fire, save us from drowning, and remove the poison of a snake or scorpion bite. In those days, I had complete faith in these mantras. As a result, the mantras also had a miraculous affect when I used them. As soon as I uttered the mantra, the effect of the poison would wear off. The effect of the mantra was amazing. Now, only the memory of my faith remains. I remember the faith I had, and feel happy.

Look; I am telling you this, that if you have faith in the Ishwara, you will never be sorrowful. Just as a small child trusts his mother completely, and is totally dependent on her, you should also be dependent on the Ishwara like a newborn baby. You will get only good fortune. Faith in the Ishwara brings salvation. Faith in the Ishwara means happiness, only happiness.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Sanyas Ko Samjho

Understand Sanyas

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Sanyas is a part of the Vedic way of life. It is an Ashram, just like the Brahmacharya, Grihastha, and Vanaprastha Ashrams. It is a stage in life. This Vedic system of the Ashrams should come into the life of every individual in the appropriate way. It is another thing if you refuse to accept it!

The word आश्रम 'aashram' means 'disciplined श्रम *shrama* (work).' What work should be done by which person? What is the eligibility of which person to do what? The 'aa' that comes before 'shram' means, मर्यादा *maryaadaa* (boundary or ambit of what is right and proper). The Pundits know this. The grammatical analysis is, ईषद् अर्थे क्रियायोगे मर्यादाऽभिविधौ तथा। एतमातडितविद्याद् वाक्यस्मरणयोगरडित् 'Eeshad arthe' kriyaayoge' maryaadaabhividhau tathaa. E'tamaatamaditamvidyaad vaakyasmaranayogarandit.'

The Brahmacharya Ashram is meant for education. Education does not mean only studying the books. It also means learning proper behavior. We often see that important people are badly behaved. This is because they have not stayed properly in the Brahmacharya Ashram, learning etiquette and serving the Guru. Nor have they learnt self-restraint, discipline and tolerance.

A Brahmachari is Agni (fire), you know! If anyone puts some objects into his life, he does not indulge in them. He burns them to ashes. The Chandogya Upanishad has described it. ब्रह्मचर्यमेवतत् ब्रह्मचर्यमेवतत् 'Brahmacharyame'vatat brahmacharyayame'vatat,' How should a Brahmachari (celibate student) live? He should always be in Satsang (the company of the spiritual). He should be disinclined towards physical indulgences. He should stay in the forest.

Children get spoilt when they are raised in the indulgence of their parents' laps. An excess of love and pampering spoils them. The parents also get too attached to the children. The Brahmacharya Ashram is a system of education. If the child is given the right teaching in this Ashram, all the other Ashrams are followed properly. The great poet Kalidasa has described the lineage of Raghu in his play, Raghuvansha.

शैशवेऽभ्यस्तविद्यानां यौवने विषयैषिणाम्।

वार्धक्ये मुनिवृत्तीनां योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम्॥

Shaishve`bhyastavidyaanaam yauvane`vishayaishinaam,

Vaardhakye`munivritteenaam yoge`naante`tanutyajam.

The men born in the Raghuvansha study the different branches of learning during their childhood. When they grow up they lead a life of luxury and indulgence. They live like Sadhus when they age, and ultimately, they establish the mind in the Brahman and give up their body.

This is the way a human being should live. If the person studies the Vedas properly during the Brahmacharya Ashram, develops the habit of serving the Guru and practicing self-restraint and tolerance, he may take Sanyas straight from the Brahmacharya Ashram. He can also take Sanyas when he is at home, or in the forest, or anywhere else. ब्रह्मचर्याद् वा गृहाद् वा वनाद् वा *Brahmacharyaad vaa grihaad vaa vanaad vaa*.

Even the Grihastha Ashram (the stage of a married householder) is not meant for over-indulgence. Its purpose is to keep desire within the boundaries of Dharma. A woman should restrict her desire to one man; a man should restrict his desire to one woman. This curtailment of desire has been given the name of Grihastha Ashram.

The Grihastha Ashram means that the Grihastha's shram is confined to what is in keeping with Dharma. A Grihastha has the facility of two predominant pleasures. One is culinary pleasure and the other is the pleasure of conjugal intimacy. A Grihastha has the convenience of ordering food to suit his taste, and of having children. It is not proper for people in other Ashrams to have these pleasures.

Even in the Grihastha Ashram, there is a मर्यादा *maryaadaa* (framework of rules). The अहिताग्नि *aahitagni* (who have taken a pledge) Grihasthas are forbidden to have conjugal relationships on days like the ekadshi, amavasya, purnima, sankranti, and eclipse. They should abstain on the days the wife has her periods. They should also see which the auspicious nights are, for coming together. They should not indulge at dawn or dusk. This is also a method of self-restraint. It is one way of keeping within the framework of what is permitted by the Shastras. To stay within this framework is called the Grihastha Ashram.

I had a friend who got married at the age of forty. His excessive indulgences resulted in his getting T.B. in three years. He left his house and came to me at Vrindavan. I would tell him, 'You do not have T.B. Stay with me. Spend time in my company. Have your meals with me.' However, he was not convinced. Then he began to vomit blood. I made him stay at Swargashram (Rishikesh). 'Eat dry rotis,' I told him. 'Drink the water from Gangaji. Roll in the sand on the bank of Gangaji.' Within six months he was totally cured. What I mean to say is that excessive conjugal indulgence is not appropriate in the Grihastha Ashram. Some rules and restraints are needed.

When people get too accustomed to the pleasures of eating and procreation, the Vanaprastha Ashram is used to curtail them. In the Vanaprastha Ashram, the wife stays with her husband. They live together, but practice restraint. No special food is ordered. Food is crushed with a stone, or cooked in the sun, or cooked over fire. People in the Vanaprastha Ashram live disciplined lives of austerity.

What is this Sanyas Ashram? It is a method of making our lives free of the disciplines of work. I will tell you something about the Sanyas Ashram now. It is seen that the Brahmacharya Ashram is followed in some places, but not properly. The Grihastha Ashram is seen. The Vanaprastha Ashram has almost disappeared.

What is the Sanyas Ashram? People don't have a proper understanding of it. These days, a Sanyasi is measured by the pomp and majesty he commands. If he heads large Mutts and Mandirs, he becomes a Sanyasi. When he gets fame and publicity, he is called a Sanyasi. The younger generations think that Sanyasis are wicked and robust people who do no work to earn money. They think that Sanyasis are idlers and a burden on this earth.

The purpose of celebrating Sanyas Jayanti is to remove this false understanding and the ignorance regarding Sanyas. Sanyas Jayanti doesn't merely mean a celebration of the day Sanyas was accepted formally. The purpose of this celebration is the removal of the foolish fallacy seated in the minds of ignorant people.

These days, people celebrate Children's' Day, Teachers' Day, Birthdays, Republic Day, Independence Day, etc. In the same way, you can consider this to be Sanyas Day! The purpose is to make people aware of the importance and need for the Sanyas Ashram that society has almost forgotten.

Two years ago, my Sanyas Jayanti was celebrated in my home town. I reached the village two days later, after celebrating it here. It took me two days to reach my village. Shri Karpatriji Maharaj had gone there. He had always been very gracious to me. Fifteen or twenty thousand people gathered there every day during the celebrations. The people ask me, 'Why do you go to Bombay for the Sanyas Jayanti? We have seen your intense asceticism and renunciation; what would the people in Bombay know about it? They don't realize your greatness as we do. What do the wealthy aristocrats know about the position you hold in our heart? For them wealth is everything. They think that everyone who goes to them goes to ask for money.'

Shri Karpatriji Maharaj said there, that Sanyas Jayanti should indeed be celebrated every year. Through this celebration, people should be reminded that Sanyas is also an Ashram; it is a part of the Vedic way of life. This Vedic system of Ashrams is an essential factor for our lives.

Now, look; there is a man. He is filled with a desire to accumulate wealth and lead a life filled with worldly indulgences. These days, such men stoop to cheating, deceit, violence and adultery. Had the idea of renunciation been present in their mind – had they been conscious that they would be giving up everything and becoming a Sanyasi – would they do all these unethical things?

If you have in mind that, चौथेपन नृप कानन जाहीं '*Chauthē`pana nripa kaanana jaaheen*' (the King should go and live in the forest in the fourth stage of life), why would lies, fraud, treachery, stealing, violence and unethical practices remain in your life? The very thought of the fourth Ashram has disappeared from the people's mind these days. This has encouraged people to become unethical. If the thought of Sanyas Ashram is kept alive in your mind, you won't become attached to possessions and worldly pleasures. In fact, the feeling of renunciation and asceticism will prevail. त्यागे वाचयेत्तत् '*Tyaage*'

vaacharaye`ttat.` सर्वेषां तपसां न्यासमेषामतिरिक्तमाहुः ‘Sarve`shaam tapasaam nyaasame`shaamatiriktamaahuh.’ Veda Bhagwan states that Sanyas is the highest of all तपस्या *tapasyaa* (asceticism).

Now I will tell you about the Sanyas of Sadhus. Perhaps some Sants (Mahatmas) may be present today. There are thousands of you here. You are the majority. What will the minority opinion of the Sanyasis achieve? The representatives of the Management will say at once, ‘Please don’t speak about Sanyas, त्याग *tyaaga* (renunciation), and tapasya here.’ Very well. I am aware of it. I understand these things.

Now, see; the word संन्यास ‘*sannyaasa*’ grammatically broken up means that ‘*san*’ is not a prefix. *San* means सम्यक् *samyak* – properly, fully. न्यास *Nyaasa* means, to throw away, to give up. It means to throw away our unnecessary accumulation. Thus, one meaning of Sanyas is सम्यक्-न्यास *samyak-nyaasa* – to discard in the proper manner.

The word ‘Sanyas’ also has other meanings. The meaning of Sanyas for the Grihastha is excellent. If a Grihastha is a Sanyasi, nothing can be better! This is discussed in the seventh canto of the Bhagwat. गृहस्तां पदवीम् ‘*Grihasthaam padaveem.*’ Yudhishtira asked Prahlad how a Grihastha could attain the same position as a Sanyasi.

Nyasa means dharohar - something that is with you, but belongs to someone else. What is this wealth you possess? It is a very good dharohar. The things that you consider to be yours don’t actually belong to you. It all belongs to someone else, and is entrusted to you for safe-keeping. Keep it safely and use it well. You have no right to destroy it. It is not to be used for gambling, drinking, or creating trouble for others. The Ishwara has entrusted you with something – don’t consider it to be yours. Consider it to be the dharohar of the Ishwara. This is the Sanyas of the Grihastha.

All the wealth in this world is created by the Ishwara. The Swarna Laxmi (the Goddess of wealth) and the Krishi Laxmi (the Goddess of agriculture) are for the Ishwara’s pleasure. All the दैवी सम्पत्ति *daivee sampatti* (the divine qualities) are created by the Ishwara. They are all in the Ishwara, and they belong to Him.

The Ishwara has been extremely benevolent; He has showered you with Grace. He has given you this body. He has given you the ज्ञानेन्द्रिय-कर्मेन्द्रिय *gnaane`ndriya –karme`ndriya* (sense organs and organs of action). He has given you eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, etc. He has given you hands and feet, a mind and an intellect. All these are entrusted to you for safekeeping. They are the Ishwara’s dharohar. भौमं दैवं चान्तरिक्षं वित्तमच्युतनिर्मितम्। तत् सर्वमुपभुञ्जानः एतद् तुरीयासदाहिवः॥ ‘*Bhaumam daivam chaantariksham vittamachyutanirmitam. Tat sarvamupabhunjaanah e`tad tureeyaasadaahivah.*’

What do thieves do? They carry away a ladder – sometimes with permission and sometimes without permission – and use it to steal things from people’s homes. They pick up something that belongs to someone else and take it home. Then they misuse the things they have stolen. They become the owner and use the stolen things for the wrong

purposes. सतः ईश्वरस्य न्यासः ‘*Satah eeshvarasya nyaasah.*’ All that we have is given by the Ishwara. Don’t misuse what you have.

Don’t see the wrong things with your eyes. Don’t use your ability to hear to listen to bad things. Don’t use your tongue to say things that shouldn’t be said. Don’t put your mind and intellect into the hands of others. If your life is ruled by another, it won’t be a happy life. If someone abuses you, and induces a return abuse from you – or garlands you and makes you respond in kind – take it that you have failed in your duty.

How dare anyone prompt an abuse from us, by abusing us? How dare anyone come and steal something from our house and induce us to go to their house and steal something in return? If this is the state of our mind, it is dismal indeed! Our mind should never harbor any inclination for revenge.

You should have the pride that this body, which is given to you, is the Ishwara’s dharohar. Your possessions, the land and wealth you have inherited, the respect and acclaim you have attained, your self-respect and ethical attitude are all the nyasa of the Sat; meaning, they belong to the Ishwara. You are merely the custodian. सतो न्यासः संन्यासः। *Sato nyaasah sannyaasah.* Everything in your life is a dharohar given by the Ishwara. Use it in the right way. सति न्यासः संन्यासः *Sati nyaasah sannyaasah.* सतः परमेश्वरस्य न्यासः संन्यासः *Satah parame’sgvarasya nyaasah sannyaasa.* All the things in your life are a dharohar given by the Ishwara. Use it in the appropriate way. सति न्यासः संन्यासः *Sati nyaasah sannyaasah.* Whatever you do, offer it up to the Ishwara. Offer up to Him all that is His, and is kept with you.

I remember the days of my childhood before my यज्ञोपवीत संस्कार *yagyopaveeta sanskaara* (the ritual of receiving the sacred thread) was done. When my Grandfather sat for his meal, he would make me sit with him. In those days, we did not wear stitched clothes when we sat for meals. We would wash our hands and feet, and sit on a wooden seat that was placed on the ground that had been plastered with cow-dung paste. When the plate of food was placed before us, Baba would tell me, ‘Bachva! Take some water in your hand, and say, कायेन वाचा मनसैन्द्रियैर्वा बुद्ध्यात्मना वानुसृजत्स्वभावात्। करोमि यत्न्यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पये तत्॥ “*Kaaye’na vaachaa manase’ndriyairvaa buddhyaatmanaa vaanusrijatsvabhaavaat. Karomi yadyat sakalam parasmai naaraayanaaye’ti samarpaye’ tat.*” My Grandfather did not teach me करोति ‘*karoti*’ (whatever you do); he taught me करोमि ‘*karomi*’ (whatever I do). He did not say समर्पयेत् ‘*samarpaye’t*’; he taught me to say, समर्पये तत् ‘*samarpaye’ tat*’. Offer the food to Narayana before you eat.

My Grandfather would say, प्राणाय स्वाहा, अपनाय स्वाहा, व्यानाय स्वाहा, उदनाय स्वाहा ‘*Praanaaya svaahaa, apaanaaya svaahaa, vyaanaaya svaahaa, udaanaaya svaahaa,*’ etc. (these are the five winds in the body to whom the first five morsels are offered). Then, अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः। प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ‘*Aham vaishvaanaro bhootvaa praaninaam de’hamaashritah. Praanaapaanasamaayuktah pachaamyannam chaturvidham.*’ The Lord seated in my mouth is eating.

I was told to say this formally, when my yagyopaveeta sanskara was done. I was told to offer the ablutions to the प्राण *praana* (the five life spirits) when I was given the yagyopaveet. Before the ritual, I would say, करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै नारायणायेति समर्पये तत् ‘*Karomi yadyat sakalam parasmai naaraayanaaye`ti samarpaye`tat,*’ and offer the food to the Lord before eating. ‘This is the Ishwara’s dharohar that I am offering to Him.’ Offer to the source, the object that has been given to you. Don’t think that it belongs to you. This is also called ‘Sanyas.’

सतः ईश्वरस्य न्यासः, न्यास-भूतो निधिः ‘*Satah eeshvarasya nyaasah.*’ *Nyaasa-bhooto nidhih* – this is with you, but it belongs to the Ishwara. Don’t use it for the wrong purpose. The Government has given you a gun to protect Government property. Don’t use it for threatening anyone. If what you have is used to perpetrate injustice, it is the same as using the gun given by the Government to threaten and loot people.

All right; this is one point about Sanyas. Now, another point. सति न्यासः संन्यासः *Sati nyaasah sannyaasah*. Offer up everything you do to Bhagwan. सम्यक् न्यासः संन्यासः *Samyak nyaasah sannyaasah*. The question is raised in the Shrimad Bhagwat, as to what is the Sanyas of a Grihastha. The answer is, सरीसृपखगमक्षिका *Sareesripakhagamakshikaa*. आत्मनः पुत्रवत् पश्येत्तैरेषां अन्तरं कियत् *Aatmanah putravat pashye`ttaire`shaam antaram kiyat.*’ That is all! Don’t consider anything in this world to be yours. Love everybody with the benevolence a father has for his son. All are your children.

The Janpad Sukta of the Atharva Veda says, सहृदयं सांमनस्य मविद्वेषं कृणोमि वः। अन्योऽन्यं अभिहर्यत् वत्सं जातमिवाघ्नया ‘*Sahridayam saamanasyapavidve`sham krinomi vah. Anyonyam abhiharyat vatsam jaatamivaaghnyaa.*’ Just be a well-wisher of all. Have universal goodwill in your heart. Have no hatred for anyone. Love each other as a cow loves her newborn calf. How much wealth do you have? दिव्यं भव्यं चान्तरिक्षं वित्तम् अच्युतनिर्मितम् यावद् भियेत जठरं तावद् स्वत्वं हि देहिनाम्। ‘*Divyam bhavyam chaantariksham vittam achyutanirmitam yaavad bhriye`ta jatharam taavad svatvam hi de`hinaam*’. Only that which has gone into your stomach is yours. Everyone has a claim to a portion of whatever is outside you, you know. Bhagwan has made it for the use of all beings. अधिकं योऽभिमन्येत..... ‘*Adhikam yobhimanye`t.....*’ Protect it! Produce more than what you need for yourself. Yes! Don’t grow only the amount of food you need; grow as much as possible, so that thousands of people can eat along with you. Don’t manufacture cloth for only your requirements; make enough to clothe many others as well. Sitaram! Now, jealousy and competition and considerations of ‘yours’ and ‘mine’ come into the clothes that are yours, as well.

I had gone to the house of a Seth (wealthy businessman). His sister and his wife were having a quarrel. The wife told his sister, ‘You have three hundred saris now. You don’t really need a new sari. Then why are you taking money for a new sari?’

‘You have five hundred saris in your cupboard at present,’ replied the man’s sister. ‘Why should you stop me from buying a few more for myself?’ This was why they were

quarreling! One lady had three hundred saris and the other lady had five hundred, and yet they quarreled! Sitaram! This is not the Sanyas of a grihastha, is it? We should consider as ours the bare minimum of the things we need. The rest is the Ishwara's property. Maintain this attitude of Sanyas in the Grihastha Ashram. You will experience comfort, peace and happiness.

Perhaps you may not be aware that भूत *bhoota* (Bhoot is a surname, and bhoot means a ghost) exist. Incase they are sitting here, please don't be offended! Bhoot exist. द्यूत *Dhoota* (a surname; the word means a cheat) also exist. Dhoot and Bhoot are common surnames in the Maheshwari community. There are Chidimars (a surname; chidiya means bird and maar means to kill) also exist. And Jalebichor (a surname; jalebi is a sweet and chor means a thief) are people in the Agarwal community. These are surnames. Yes! Incase some people didn't know it, they know it now. Just as Dresswala is a surname, so are Dhoot and Bhoot, Chidimar and Jalebichor. All that this means is that if someone says, 'Chidimar', the man with this surname will think that he is being called. It does not mean that he is accused of killing a bird. If a man is called 'Karodimal', he will respond to that address. It does not mean that he is a multimillionaire. It is just that he has been given this name.

That is why the Bhagwat has a description, तस्मादपि नामसु यावदर्थः स्याद् तावद् अप्रमत्तः '*Tasmaadapi naamasu yaavadarthah syaad taavad apramattah.*' People have a tendency to give lectures without having a full understanding of the subject. They ask, 'How is he Karodimal – he does not have a crore of rupees? How is he Chadamimal – he is not at all poor!' This is not proper. The purport of a word must be correctly understood.

If गाम् आनय *gaam aanaya* is understood to mean a cow, it is the correct meaning. There is no need to give other interpretations to it. There is no need to interpret it as Prithvi (the earth). So, my brother, we should not get lost in the maze of possible meanings; we should grasp the essence, the purport of what is being said. यावद् भ्रियेत जठरं तावद् स्वत्वं हि देहिनाम् '*Yaavad bhriye'ta jatharam taavad svatvam hi de'hinaam.*' The wealth you have has been given by the Ishwara. Don't feel attached to it, because it is not really yours. Use it well, knowing it to be the Ishwara's dharohar. Offer it up to Him.

The Sanyasi is a link in our society. The Sanyasi conveys a message of renunciation to the rich people. 'Look! I have nothing, but I am happy. You don't need to stoop to robbery or violence, in order to accumulate wealth. त्यागेनैकेन अमृतत्वमानशुः *Tyaage'naike'na amritatvamaanashuh.* The essence of अमृत *amrita* (elixir) is obtained through renunciation.'

The Sanyasi gives a message to the poor people. 'Look! I have nothing, but still I am happy. You do not need to take recourse to stealing, cheating, or deceit in order to gather wealth. Wealth is not what gives happiness.'

This way, a Sanyasi protects society. His life is a message of renunciation and contentment for all. It saves society from friction and revolt. The Sanyasi saves society from class friction and class war.

These wealthy people hold up their noses and walk around with solemn faces. Yes! One Seth used to sit with me. This was before I became a Sanyasi. He would not talk to people. He remained silent and aloof. One day, I asked him, ‘Why don’t you talk to people? Why don’t you smile and play games like others? Why do you sit like this – silent and gloomy?’

‘Maharaj,’ he replied, ‘people will come and ask me for money if they become friendly. As soon as people get to know me, they will ask for something or other. They may ask for a paltry sum, a few thousand rupees, or a few lakhs of rupees. The fewer the people acquainted with me, the fewer requests I will have to face. This is why I am reticent and aloof.’ The Seth is still living. He is a multimillionaire.

Oh, my friends, what will you do with so much money? Your attitude would be understandable if you could have taken even a small coin with you when your life ends. All these are tricks! You are deceiving yourself. Use your brains. Don’t make a deal where you are the loser. To toil all your life, and at the end, spread out your empty hands as you depart, is not an indication of wisdom. When you leave, you will be carrying the संस्कार *sanskaara* (subtle mental impressions) of stealing, cheating, deceit, treachery, and other sins, because you can’t accumulate great wealth unless you stoop to unethical practices. My good man, use your wealth to do good deeds, so that your next birth is filled with happiness and peace. That is being wise.

The Bhagwat says, यस्ते अप्येकामात्मनो दारां नृणांस्वत्त्वग्रहो यतः। जह्याद् यदर्थे स्वप्राणन्हन्याद् वा पितरं गुरुम्। तस्यां स्वत्वं स्त्रियां जह्याद् यस्तेन ह्यजितो जितः ‘yaste Apye`kaamaatmano daaraam nrinaamsvattvagriho yatah. Jahyaad yadarthe` svapraanaanhanyaad vaa pitaram gurum. Tasyaam svatvam striyaam jahyaad `na hyajito jitah.’ When a man persuades his wife – who is his most beloved – to serve all, he succeeds in winning Bhagwan’s heart. A man is prepared to gamble with his life for his wife. He can give up his life for her. Men become so blinded by their love for their wife that they become suspicious of even their father and their Guru. A man even kills them! When a man controls his attachment and possessiveness for such a well-loved wife, and tells her to serve all, that grihastha is called a Sanyasi. The real Sanyasi is a grihastha who involves his wife in the service of all. He has truly won over Bhagwan Himself!

कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ‘*Kurvannapi na lipyate*’, is mentioned several times in the Gita. A person can remain unattached with the work he does. This is excellent. However, the subtle indication in this is that when he can remain unattached even when working, there is no possibility of his not being attached when he doesn’t work; when he withdraws from worldly activities. People who withdraw from work are called कर्मन्धी ‘*karmaandhee*’. In Sanskrit, karmandhi is another name for a Sanyasi. Bhagwan made the Sanyasi sit on a

pedestal, folded His hands, and said, ‘Maharaj, if you follow my method, you will not be subject to the laws of Karma even if you work.’

Why is Sanyas Jayanti celebrated? The purpose is to ensure that the sanskara of the four Ashrams – including the Sanyas Ashram described in all the Vedas – should not be lost. People should not lose sight of the importance of Sanyas. They should not forget how vital it is for our lives. This is why we celebrate Sanyas Jayanti. Sanyas Jayanti does not mean merely that it is the anniversary of the day I took Sanyas. It is not an individual’s Sanyas Jayanti. Sanyas is a part of the Ashram system of the Vedas.

Sanyas is not a सम्प्रदाय *sampradaaya* (religious school of thought). There can be many schools of thought. There is the Vairagi Sampradaya, the Udasi Sampradaya, the Kabir Sect, the Nanak Sect, etc. Sanyas, however, is not a Sect. It is one of the four Ashrams of the Vedic system. If you divide it properly, the Brahmachari is the Vishwa-Vaishwanara (the gross world). The Grihastha is the Taijas-Hiranyagarbha (the subtle world). The Vanaprastha is the Pragya-Ishwara (the Cosmic power), and the Sanyasi is the Turiya-Brahman incarnate. If you understand Sanyas, you will obtain the knowledge of the Brahman – you will obtain Brahmagnan. ॐ नमो नारायण *On namo naaraayana*.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

Ashram

The Four stages of Life

Narayana! Narayana! Narayana! Narayana!

Some people give great importance to the Ashrams. They say that this is the greatest thing. People who have the abhimaana (subtle ego) of adhering to the Ashram system say that the Paramartha Tattva (essence of the supreme achievement) is the Ashram.

Look, apart from the Paramatma, everything perceived contains माया *maayaa* (pretense; the Lord's power of illusion). Everything but the Paramatma has अविद्या *avidyaa* (nescience) and कल्पना *kalpanaa* (imagination). Now, if we are to establish the one, eternal, supreme essence – the Paramatma – we will have to expose the truth about maya, avidya and kalpana, won't we? Now, see what the truth is.

In the villages, I have seen that people show the जनेऊ *jane'u* (sacred thread) and pretend to be Brahmins. Once someone asked, 'what is your caste?'

'My brother, I am a Brahmin.'

'You don't look like a Brahmin. Are you a Brahmin or not?'

'See this, my brother, I am wearing a janeu.'

So then, who is a Brahmin? Is it just any man who has a चोटी *choti* (sacred tuft of hair) and janeu? Narayana! One day, a Muslim man kept a choti and wore a janeu, and sat in line with the Brahmins at a feast given for Brahmins. One man was suspicious. 'Who are you?' he asked.

'I am a Brahmin.'

'From which clan?' asked the man. 'What is your गोत्र *gotra* (lineage)? Who is your प्रवर *pravara* (the Sage who started the branch)? Which branch do you belong to?'

या खुदा 'Yaa khudaa!' said the man. 'There is a 'who' even among Brahmins?'

So then, what is the Tattva (essence)? Is the Ashram the Paramartha Tattva? Who is a Tattvagya (knower of the Tattva)? Is it the आश्रमाभिमानि *aashramaabhimaani* (the one who has the subtle ego of belonging to the Ashram system)? You can understand that the Ashram is not the Paramartha Tattva. The तत्त्ववेत्ता *tattvave'ttaa* (the one who knows the Tattva) Mahapurush (great soul) is not an ashramabhimani. Narayana! The Sadhus are strongly inclined towards the Ashram system, aren't they?

What am I to tell you? These days, even houses are called 'Ashram', isn't it? Yes! People make a building that costs hundreds of thousands, and call it 'Kutiya', which means a small mud hut. Maharaj, there are many such Kutiya's where every kind of nefarious activity takes place. At Benares there is a house called 'Needa'. You all know that needa means a bird's nest.

In Bombay, a Seth has named his house 'Jhonpadi' (a makeshift hut). Another Seth calls his house 'Jhonpda' (a makeshift cabin). A Seth from Bombay has a house in Poona

called ‘Parna Kutir’ (a hut made of mud and leaves). Those who see it wonder where the parna – leaves – are! No parna is to be found in that house, as you can imagine. Thus, these days, people’s houses are given names like Ashram, Jhonpadi, Jhonpada, Kutir, Kutiya, etc. This is a good development. Their house becomes an Ashram!

Very well. Narayana! What is the meaning of the word आश्रमी ‘aashramee’? It is said, वेषस्य आश्रम शब्दार्थत्वे ‘*Ve’shasya aashrama shabdaarthatve*.’ Ashram means the dress. The dress is the Ashram. The one who wears the dress appropriate to his Ashram is an Ashrami (one who adheres to the Ashram system). A man who wears a kurta and coat is a Grihastha (married householder) Ashrami. One who wears saffron robes is a Sanyas Ashrami.

Look; if the meaning of Ashram becomes just the dress, then the जाति *jaati* (social level) will be cut away completely. Even thieves, cobblers, and removers of the night soil will wear saffron clothes and become Sanyasis. At Vrindavan, they sing a song. वेषधारी हरि के उर सालैं ‘*Ve’shadhaaree hari ke`ura saalain.*’ It is a beautiful song. To accept reverence on the strength of the dress, is not being an Ashrami, you know! Hardly a day passes in Bombay that I go out and fail to see some beggar in saffron clothes. Now, tell me, are these beggars Sanyasis? I see these beggars don saffron robes and cheat the simple hearted Grihasthas. They go to people’s homes and say, ‘I have brought treasures for you. See this – I have brought you a rudraksha (a berry that enhances spiritual powers). I have brought a genuine Shaligram (round stone worshipped as Vishnu Bhagwan) from the Gandaki river. I have got a rare, right-faced shankha (conch shell).’

Narayana! It is all lies. They sell fakes. Fake conch shells are made nowadays. They cut the shell to make it the shape they want. They attach silver or gold to it. The trusting Grihasthas get trapped by the smooth talk of these cheats.

The Grihasthas have श्रद्धा *shraddhaa* (faith), and respect for Sanyasis. When they see a person wearing saffron clothes, with a horizontal or vertical तिलक *tilak* (mark) of sandalwood paste on their forehead, wearing a necklace of wooden beads, holding a दंड *danda* (Monk’s staff), with wooden slippers on his feet, they believe that he is a Mahatma. My brother, clothes do not make a man a Mahatma. The value of the Ashram does not lie in the clothes a person wears. A person whose dress indicates his Ashram does not automatically become an Ashrami. If saffron clothes and other articles signifying a Sanyasi were all that the Ashram meant, even the beggars and criminals will become Sanyas Ashramis. As a result, the whole system of the Ashram will be cut away.

All right, then. We say that the Ashram does not depend on the dress. It is the sanskaara (rituals) that are the basis of the Ashram. However, the sanskaras are in the body. Since the body is not the Paramartha, how can the sanskaras that are in the body be the Paramartha? Even if the body is branded with an indelible mark, it will not be the Paramartha.

Narayana! How can an Ashram based on the body and sanskaras be the Paramartha? I will tell you something about my childhood. That was when I was very childish. Don't think that that is still the case! I used to tease my Mother a lot when I was young.

When my Mother went to Bhet Dwarka for the first time, they had a practice of doing a sanskara by branding with a red hot iron. It was called the तप्तमुद्रा संस्कार *taptamudraa sanskaara*. My Mother had this मुद्रा *mudraa* (mark) branded on her hand. I used to tease my Mother by saying, 'Ma, when you die, you will go to Vaikunth (the Land of Vishnu Bhagwan). Suppose the doormen stop you, show them your hand and tell them, "See this! I had gone to Bhet Dwarka and got the taptamudra sanskara done." Yes, Mother, put out your hand and show them the mudra!' This is how I teased her!

Narayana! Later on my Mother was initiated into the Ramanuja Sampradaya (Sect). She did all the proper sanskaras of the Vaishnavas (devotes of Bhagwan Vishnu). Actually, in my Mother's eyes, there was no difference between the Vaishnava Sampradaya and the Sanyas Sampradaya. She would come wherever I went. When I went to Udiya Babaji, she also came there. She came to every Mahatma I went to. She would establish a personal relationship with her reverence, with every Sadhu I respected. Her interest was that if the Sadhu was aware of her devotion and circumstances, he would – for her sake – refrain from making me a Sadhu! Her reverence for them was genuine.

Maharaj! We all know that the outer sanskaras do not go with us to the realms after death. Narayana! This body will remain in this world. It will not go anywhere else. The hand that bears the mark of the taptamudra will be burnt in this world. This body is not the Paramartha. It is not even अर्थ *artha* (of worldly value). This body is अर्थाभास *arthaadhyasa* (an illusion of being valuable). The clay, water, fire, air, and space are the artha. They are the पंच भूत *pancha bhoota* (five elements); and the body is कल्पित *klripita* कल्पित – *kalpita* – imagined in them. It is an illusion of arth. Since even the pancha bhoota are not the Paramartha, how can the body composed of them be the Paramartha? Neither the five elements, nor the body made of them is the Paramartha.

If you take an aim in this body, it will not carry you to the Ishwara. People quarrel over whether sandalwood paste should be applied horizontally or vertically on the forehead. 'This is my Ashram. I am an Udasi (a religious Sect).' 'I am a Sanyasi.' Oh, Rama! Religion does not teach us to hate anyone. There are Shaivas (who worship the Ishwara as Lord Shiva) and there are Vaishnavas (who worship the Ishwara as Lord Vishnu). What difference does it make, if the Narmada Shankar (an oval stone from the Narmada, worshipped as Shankar Bhagwan) is long, and the Shaligram (round stone worshipped as Vishnu Bhagwan) is more rounded? Our mind should take on the form of Shiva. The devotee must have the feeling that he is worshipping Lord Shiva. A devotee's bhaava (feeling) should be शालिग्रामाकार-नारायणाकार *shaaligraamaakaara – naaraayannakaara*. He should feel that he is worshipping Lord Narayana in the form of the Shaligram. The feeling should be ईश्वराकार *eeshvaraakaara* – that he is worshipping the Ishwara.

Does the Ishwara cease to be the Ishwara because the stone that is worshipped as a symbol is longish; and become the Ishwara if it is round? The longness or roundness of the stone is not important. What is important is the feeling of reverence behind the act of worship.

Do you know the purpose of the Ashram system? Ashram is meant to keep our श्रम *shrama* (work) within the limits of Dharma. Shrama is the dominant factor in Ashram. आ-समन्तात् श्रमएव यस्मिन् ‘*Aa-samantaat shrama e`va yasmin.*’ That, in which there is shrama from all sides, is Ashrama. You cannot be an Ashrami unless you do shram. My brother, as long as you are an आश्रमाभिमानि *ashramaabhimaani* (having the अभिमान *abhimaana* [ego] of belonging to an Ashram) you will have to put in some effort. When you are liberated from the subtle ego of being an ashramabhimani, the discipline of working will leave you automatically. Narayana! The dilemma is that you neither wish to give up this subtle ego, nor do you want to put in any effort. Tell me, now, how can the system of Ashram continue?

The Brahmacharya Ashram (celibate student) is for serving. To serve the Guru and obtain learning from him is the goal of the Brahmacharya Ashram. When a Brahmachari is developed, the Guru sees whether his अन्तःकरण *antahkaran* (fourfold mind) is inclined towards निवृत्ति *nivritti* (withdrawal from worldly activities) or प्रवृत्ति *pravritti* (involvement in worldly activities). If the student is inclined towards *nivritti*, he is told, ‘Come, be a naishthik (of religious faith).’ If he is inclined towards *pravritti*, and desires a life of luxury and human attachments, he is told, ‘Come into the Grihastha Ashram. Stay in it with disciplined indulgences and desires.’

When the Grihastha Ashram is followed properly, the man says, ‘My indulgences and attachments are controlled. I have succeeded in controlling my desires.’

‘Then come into the Vanaprastha Ashram. Retire from worldly interests and cultivate spirituality. Stay among भोग *bhoga* (luxuries) but save yourself from them.’ Narayana! Ultimately, the person is told, ‘Come into the Sanyas Ashram. Give up all that seems desirable in this world. Be established in your essence.’

Yes, my brother, all these Ashram are only shram. The Brahmacharya Ashram has physical exertion. The Grihastha Ashram has physical as well as mental exertion. The Vanaprastha Ashram has physical and mental तपस्या *tapasyaa* (asceticism). In the Sanyas Ashram the person is established in the Atma that is unattached. Actually, the Sanyas Ashrami is not an Ashrami at all. He is a ब्रह्मावस्थानी *brahmaavasthaani*. He has reached a stage where he is one with the Brahman. A Sanyasi is not an Ashrami. न यतेराश्रमः प्रायः ‘*Na yate`raashramah praayah.*’ A Yati (successful Sanyasi) is beyond all Ashrams.

In the Shrimad Bhagwat, Shri Krishna has described the Sanyas Ashram to Uddhavji. He says:

ज्ञाननिष्ठो विरक्तो वा मदभक्तो वानपेक्षकः ।
सलिंगानाश्रमांस्त्यक्त्वा चरेदविधिगोचरः ॥

*Gnaananiṣṭha virakto vaa madbhakto vaanape`kshakah,
Salingaanaashraamaanstyaktvaa chare`davidhigocharah.*

A Yati may be ज्ञाननिष्ठ *gnaananiṣṭha* (having total Gnan) or he may be a विरक्त *virakta* (filled with renunciation), or he may be a निष्काम भक्त *nishkaama bhakta* (a devotee who desires nothing from Bhagwan) – he should give up the Ashrams that are recognized by symbols. He should be free of the obligations of the Ashrams. If he retains the subtle ego of being an Ashrami, he will continue to have duties and obligations. This is why he should do the Sanyas (giving up) of the Ashrams. अव्यक्तलिङ्गो व्यक्तार्थो ‘*Avyaktalingo vyaktaartha*.’ This verse is given in the Bhagwat and also in the Upanishads. An enlightened person should stay in such a way that common people are unable to recognize his greatness. He should have no mark indicating his Ashram. He may, or may not wear saffron clothes. He may, or may not carry a danda and kamandalu (vessel for food). People may or may not know that he is an enlightened Saint. The meaning of व्यक्तार्थ ‘*vyaktaartha*’ is भिक्षामात्रप्रयोजनम् ‘*bhikshaamaatraprayojanam*’ (food is his only need). His mind should be free of all desires. The virakta may be a Gnan nishtha, or he may be a devotee who desires nothing from Bhagwan. He should give up the Ashrams and the symbols of the Ashrams. He should move about without being burdened by the विधि-निषेध *vidhi-nishe`dha* (dos and don’ts) of the Ashrams.

बुधो बालकवत् क्रीडेत् कुशलो जडवच्चरेत्।
वदेदुन्मत्तवद् विद्वान् गोचर्या नैगतश्चरेत्॥

*Budho baalakavat kreedet`kushalo jadavaccharet`,`
Vade`dunmattavad vidvaan gocharyaam naigatashcharet`.*

Who is an आश्रमातीत *aashramaateeta* (beyond the Ashrams)? It is the person who is wise and intelligent, but has a childlike playfulness. He is skillful, but behaves like an unanimated being. He is learned, but talks eccentrically. He is Vedic (a knower of the Vedas) but his behavior is like a cow grazing here and there. This is told to us so that the liberated souls who are untrammelled by the norms of the Ashrams do things that are right and proper – not from compulsion – but from personal preference. A Yati should do nothing that is forbidden, but the reason for this should be his own preference; not because of the rules that apply to others. His actions should be as natural as a child’s.

दोषगुह्या भयातीतो न निषेधान्न निवर्तते।
गुणबुद्ध्या तु विहितं न करोति यथार्भकः॥

(भागवत)

*Doshabudhyaa bhayaateeto na nishe`dhanna nivartate`,`
Gunabuddhya tu vihitam na karoti yatharbhakah.*

(Bhagwat)

Just as a small child does what he feels like doing, a Tattvagya also does what he feels like. His not doing anything wrong is not because of his fear of the Shastras or the people. It is not because he thinks that they are wrong and sinful. Nor are his good deeds

done out of considerations of पुण्य *punya* (spiritual merit). It is simply not in his nature to do anything that is wrong. He has a natural tendency to do the right thing.

Narayana! This is why a Tattvagya is not as Ashrami. A Tattvavetta is not an Ashramabhimani. To have the subtle ego of belonging to an Ashram is not the Paramartha. It is not even अर्थ *artha*, leave alone the परम *param* (supreme) अर्थ *artha* (achievement). Ashramabhimana (the ego of being an Ashrami) is a संस्कृत *sanskrita* (cultured) form of देहाभिमान *de'haabhimana* (identification with the body). The विकृत *vikrit* (distorted) form of dehabhimana is a desire for a life of luxury and sensual pleasures. The Tattvagya Mahapurush is neither sanskrit nor vikrit. He is beyond all worldly considerations. This is why the Ashramabhimanis cannot touch a Tattvagya Mahapurush.

Narayana! Where have you got stuck? You have developed some ego, and stayed in it, isn't it? You had set out to look for the Ishwara, but for some reason your gaze was fixed on some external object. This is why you have lost your way. The Paramatma – who is obtained only when ego is given up – is what you had set out to obtain. You set off from your house to obtain that Paramatma, whose attainment results in the breaking of vanity, pride, and ego. Is it not so?

However, what happened? You developed the subtle ego of being in one Ashram, wearing saffron clothes, wearing the dress of a Sanyasi. You got stuck in the vanity of one sanskara, one caste, one religious Sect. My brother, you have got stuck. The external sanskaras of your body cannot go to the realms after death. Your body will remain here, so it is futile to imagine that the sanskaras done to the body will go with you after death. The Atma is unattached. It is aloof from both vikar and sanskar. It can neither be distorted nor improved.

Narayana! Know Satya. Recognize the ultimate truth. It is you, your Self. You are the Paramartha Tattva. You, yourself, are the Brahman. Experience your Self to be the Parabrahma Paramatma. This experience of feeling one with the Brahman is the Paramartha Satya. That is the reality, the supreme achievement. It is existence. Whatever is perceived, apart from our Self, is only Maya. It is all an illusion. It is nescience. It is imagination. Apart from your Self, all that seems to be real is nothing but a perception that is मिथ्या *mithyaa* (a relative truth).

It is not possible to have a direct experience of the inseparable, indivisible essence of the Parabrahma Paramatma, unless and until the subtle ego of being a separate individual, and the belief in the existence of different sense objects, is given up. The non-dual Sacchidananda (pure existence, consciousness and bliss) is the essence of the Paramatma. When a person experiences the Brahman, all urges, tendencies, and ego are removed. अनाग्रह *Anaagraha* (lack of urges) is the fruit of the Gnan about the one, eternal Paramartha Tattva.

Have no urge for doing – or not doing – anything about the worldly perceptions and the अनात्मा *anaatmaa* (that which is not the Atma) objects in the world. Don't accept the subtle ego of being an Ashrami. Don't identify with your body.

When a person has the direct experience of the self-established essence of the Brahman that is the substratum of everything, the one who shows us everything, and is self-effulgent – he is liberated from all ego.

Rama! Rama! Rama! Rama!

